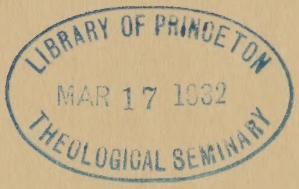

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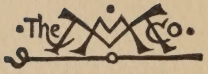
ON THE RELIGIOUS FRONTIER



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ON THE RELIGIOUS FRONTIER

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

From an Outpost of Ethical Religion

BY
PERCIVAL CHUBB
of the Ethical Society of St. Louis

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1931

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Set up and printed. Published October, 1931.

SET UP BY BROWN BROTHERS LINOTYPERS
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY

TO

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW MEMBERS
OF THE ETHICAL SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

A BOOKMARK OF OUR FORTY-FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

FOREWORD

THIS little book is precisely characterized by the title. It is written on the religious frontier by one who has long sojourned there, early found a home there, and has for many years been engaged in commending it to the homeless. He tries to report the present situation there, and the predicament of those who are to-day finding their way to this border land between the zone of orthodox religion and the region beyond, where men live unattached to any distinctively religious institution and are not united in any religious fellowship.

While the main thesis of the book is the prime need of religious fellowship, most of it is devoted to a presentation of what is offered in the writer's new-found and recently established home, where a religion of ethical fellowship has stayed the flight of some of the estrays. Here the modern-minded may find a new simplified type of religion which exacts no conformities of creed, is hospitable to new knowledge, fronts the challenges and perplexities of the life of to-day in all their concreteness, and allows for fluctuating diversities of individual conviction.

He has tried to profit by his experiences on two frontiers, English and American; and has drawn on the former when they aided understanding. If England

drew upon America for the new ethical inspiration, America has drawn liberally upon England for its exponents. The alliance has been close and the influences complementary.

Should the method of the book seem unduly discursive, the plea must be that religion is not a matter to be neatly disposed of; and particularly the religion, new-born on the frontier, which it is the purpose of this book to interpret in its vital rather than its formal features.

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PART I

THE FRONTIER: ITS REPUDIATIONS AND THEIR POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS

THE FRONTIER

THIS is the frontier where the last scattered outposts of organized religion stand. Across it files of wayfarers are passing into the territory of the unchurched. They have left the churches to which they belonged—mainly by the accident of birth—to join the ranks of the unattached. Some hesitate: there are children with them. They contemplate renouncing the fellowship of religion for the isolation of detachment, which means that these children are to be cut off from the social and cultural influences of religious associations. A few border outposts offer a last hope. They invite the wayfarers to reconsider their predicament, contending that their scruples may be met by new types of association.

These small modernist outposts include left-wing Unitarians, Humanists, Ethicists, and others. Mingled with them are smaller cults representing varieties of New Thought; and further to the rear are the advanced churches in which liberalized leaders preach bold and unconventional doctrines, set in liturgies that conflict with them, under the strain of embarrassing compromises.

The influences that have led to this exodus are many and varied. Any classifications we may make will be rough, neglecting some fine shadings of difference; but we may broadly distinguish two or three types of actual

truancy. First, there are the conscientious objectors, who have found the religion in which they were reared either intellectually outdated or practically futile as a force that directs and energizes action. There are others—a larger company—who have succumbed to the strain of high-pressure living and seek relaxation and health on Sundays, or an escape from the hubbub of the streets and a stuffy apartment-house life. They feel the call of outdoors to refreshing recreation—the allurements of a country shack or a country club or the wild countryside. The automobile has made these flights easy; and crowded highways proclaim deserted churches. And then there is a cross section of the "intellectuals," who will frankly tell you that they have ceased to feel any religious needs. They are readers; they are actively interested in the cultural movements of their time—the arts, music, drama, philosophy, politics—and these suffice them, they believe, for the inner life.

This, we repeat, is to handle human nature roughly, as schematists are given to doing; and in dealing with so elusive a matter as men's religion we must check our eagerness to generalize. For instance, these Sunday excursionists and "week-enders" are not all in the same case. Many will say that they still belong to a communion. They resent the label of "heathen" or "pagan." They are once-or-twice-a-year worshipers—at Easter or Christmas—and cling to a family tradition. They expect to be buried with church rites; and their sons and daughters will certainly be married in

the odor of fashionable sanctity. Others like "a book of verses underneath the bough," or may cherish what Wordsworth called "natural piety." So that many qualifications must be allowed for; and at best we can be approximative only.

But, after all, these deserters and escapists have fallen away from active fellowship; it is no longer an effective and constraining need. And it is on this fact of need that our discussion is to pivot. We are concerned here with religion as signifying religious fellowship, or the collective participation in some sort of "worship" (worth-ship) in the widest sense, as paying a tribute to worth or worthiness.

Let this safeguard, if it may, what is to be said hereafter against the charge of intentionally sweeping generalizations. And let it be premised at the outset that what is to be said here is said from the station of the frontier and for those who find themselves there. It is an attempt to deal with the situation at the frontier. It is not a summons to discontent and revolt, but to recovery and reinvigoration. The repudiations and perplexities of the frontier are recognized, and have been shared in; but the hope is that, facing them unafraid, they may be made the starting point of new affirmations and new life. The importance of fellowship is the postulate; and a conviction of the vital need of it for the disaffected is the driving solicitude that prompts a frank and veracious treatment of the facts.

And this much more must be said at the outset as to the personal approach of the reporter, that he is not

"making the best of a bad job." He is of those who have found what they regard as a frontier deliverance, and rejoice in a great liberation. The new way is for them better than the old. It traverses higher ground. The prospects are wider, the air more bracing, and the spirit of the frontier more adventurous. So the attempt will be made, first, to present a composite picture of the frontier state of mind, and the interplay of the forces and influences that have been found operative there; and then to interpret the spirit and the foundations of the new and saving faith.

II

We shall first inquire as to the deeper meaning of this increasing secession. Is it perhaps the fulfillment of Guyau's prediction of a "non-religion of the future"? Is religion to prove a passing phase of man's development, to be outgrown as he comes of age? The indifference of the educated youth of to-day, who (as disturbed parents lament) cannot be interested in religion, may be a symptom of this demise.

One may too easily dismiss this possibility. It receives attention in a trenchant book just to hand, *Belief Unbound,* by Professor William P. Montague, who contends that the indictment of religion that is "perhaps the most dangerous because the most influential of all . . . is based on the increasing *irrelevance* of religion to the needs and interests of modern life." This, we believe, is the most important count in the indictment. Religion has chosen for its sole text a

story of long ago. Its world is not our world. Its problems are not our problems, save only in a very general and abstract sense. It presupposes a world of discredited knowledge, of rude guesses, of mythological and legendary lore. It takes one out of a world of present and actual fact and of vastly expanded dimensions into a remote, shrunken, and ghostly world haunted by fear, cringing obeisance, and superstitious prostrations. It is this divorce from reality, this irrelevancy "to the needs and interests of modern life," that pushes to the breaking point men who demand a very present help in a very present time of trouble. And this is the master key to the situation on the frontier.

But there is more than that, as Professor Montague reminds us. Let me quote him further:

> To the modern temper religion is fast coming to seem unnecessary because fear and sorrow are no longer the major themes of our more serious culture. There is a *new worldliness* that is the outcome, not of thoughtlessness and triviality, but of a new thoughtfulness and a new confidence in man's power to make life happy and secure by purely secular devices. . . . To the extent that men see a prospect of abolishing, or radically mitigating, these enemies [fear and sorrow] of their happiness, they will reject the technique of escape and its mood of defeatism. Religion will be *outmoded* and its tidings of escape to another and better world will ring cold in the ears of those who love this.[1]

It is this ominous fact, that religion is becoming both outmoded and irrelevant to the needs and interests

[1] Pp. 86-88.

of modern life, that is being faced on the religious frontier. It is the outstanding fact there. Is this condition irretrievable? Does it symptomize that disappearance of religion which Guyau predicts? One of the outposts says, No; and I am to explain why.

But if the tide of the "new worldliness" that floats men to this frontier is to be stemmed, it can only be by bringing religion close to these needs and interests. Which means that its business must be with the needs that are pressing the more intelligent of those who are in flight from the churches. And on the frontier—let it be said again—it is with these thinking and inquiring people that we have mostly to deal, and not the acceptant masses, for the majority of whom religion is a folk-way and an accident of birth. Religion must vary with the mental equipment. It cannot be all things to all men.

For these comparatively few but rapidly increasing secessionists the religion of the churches has failed, we submit, because it has lost its moorings in the modern mind. At any rate that is the conclusion we draw from our dealings with them. The climate of modern culture is unfriendly to this churchism. Let me say that by the modern mind I do not mean the scholar's mind, which may be cloistral. I mean the lay mind exposed to and curious about the more striking intellectual trends of to-day; the mind that has followed the Dayton trial and the Russian Revolution; the mind that has been opened to new vistas of history by Wells's *Outline,* and may have passed on to *The*

Golden Bough of Frazer; the mind that may have made its contacts with intellectual free-lancers and skirmishers like Bertrand Russell, or the wide-sweeping intelligence of John Dewey, a scholar of the arena, who now busies himself with practical politics. For those who have made these contacts, the battle of competing creeds and sects—Catholic or Protestant—is outdated.

We venture to say that for such frontier minds clerical discussions of the assumed fundamentals of the Christian faith—the Fall and Atonement, original sin and redemption, the Trinity, Christology, miracle, have lost reality. The modern mind is weighing *the validity of any affirmations whatsoever* concerning fate and freedom, man and God; the trustworthiness and validity of human hopes and ideals; the meaning and the future of the human struggle. These are the questions debated to-day on public platforms and in the popular magazines. *The Modern Temper,* as Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch calls it in his widely read book of that title, is a temper of thoroughgoing skepticism and bewilderment. Is man a machine and a puppet, or is he a person? Is civilization an inflated bubble or a significant prophecy? Is competitive industrialism doomed? What is the future for sex, marriage and the family?—and so on; such are the typical questionings of active minds to-day. Has religion anything to say about them? Will it bring them to the touchstone of first principles? Will it try to compass them in that synthetic view of life which men are seeking? Or are they outside its pale?

Is religion an affair of the sanctuary, or of the street? It is a safe guess that if the churches continue to occupy themselves with Biblical exegesis and the teachings of saints and fathers who lived in remote ages and in a primitive environment, they will be deserted. We may hazard the opinion that the recent papal encyclicals on marriage, education, and labor reflect uneasy premonitions of this eventuality.

The fact is that people who live in the atmosphere of modern knowledge know that contemporary culture —since Goethe, let us say—does not move in the ecclesiastical or churchly zone. Few, if any, of the influential figures of the past century have moved in it; Carlyle and Emerson, Mill and Marx, Darwin and Huxley, Ibsen and Tolstoy, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, come to mind at once. Modern culture is world-minded; literature is, history and science are; art is fast becoming so; and as for commerce, "Its unit is the world," as a publicist puts it. This world is no longer bounded on the east by Palestine and on the west by the British Isles. The story of man is no longer a Biblical story of six thousand years. Christianity takes its place as a recent episode in human history, and is now seen against an expanding background of ancient civilizations and cults which explain its gestation and development. We are escaping from parochial views of humanity, and are living in a world that is coextensive with its mundane home and coeval with perhaps a million years of human adventure. Culture is engaged in the endeavor to transcend re-

gional, ethnic, and national differences and barriers; and religion must follow suit. Anglicanism, Judaism, Hinduism—what place have they? The practical as well as the intellectual world of to-day is striving to become international-minded, and to grow up to an appreciation of the contributory values of the unlike. If religion cannot widen to this larger outlook, if it cannot shed its exclusivism and parochialism, then Guyau's "non-religion of the future" will depopulate the churches and synagogues, and the exodus across the frontier to the territory of the unchurched will become a great migration.

So the vital question is, Can there be an arrest of this flight on the frontier? and through this arrest the communication of a saving spirit and attitude to the churches in the rear? It must, we maintain, be a spirit of resolute determination to promote righteousness or right living in all the spheres of activity. It must lead, and not lamely and shamefully follow, as it has in the past when the great battles for freedom were fought; when slavery was in question; when war, or social injustice or political rottenness, or business greed and unscrupulousness are in question. That has been the shame in the past, and one of the prime causes of the revolt from orthodoxy. The Great War was a religious scandal; and it is only quite recently that the churches have begun to realize the disgrace of acquiescence in a violation of the first commandment of their Master. Still no resonant cry of indignation goes echoing through the country against the riot of political

and business corruption and the orgy of crime that now disgrace it. The churches may be charged with substituting ritual for righteousness. The old Hebrew prophets, who brought that very charge against their contemporaries, did not hesitate to enter the arena of politics; but religion to-day stands aloof, although this Republic is based on an affirmation of religious import, namely, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness on the part of the least of these, our fellow citizens. That affirmation should be a postulate of religion and incorporate in its total view of life. But behold! we find it flouted. We find ourselves in a plight when millions of pauperized able-bodied men and women are mocked by this assertion of the right to life! Is it, ask our people on the frontier, a concern of religion that a life of honorable labor (an essential of moral health) should be made possible for these disinherited? or is it not? Condemned Russia is answering this question by thrusting aside a religion of acquiescence in social injustice, and substituting a religion directed upon human welfare—here, now, on earth, as it is in the heaven of human ideals and hopes.

Our attitude is not to be one of negation and discouragement. We announce a hope; and this path of hope starts from the fact that there are elements of affirmation and belief implicit in the repudiations of the religious frontier. Russia is still too dubious an experiment, too darkly shadowed as yet by infirmities of human nature, to be more than suggestive; but apparently reliable reporters of what is afoot there (Mr.

Maurice Hindus e.g.) assure us that the key to the iconoclasm of a militant atheism is the impassioned affirmation of a new Humanism that expresses the positive and constructive forces at work building a new society. The religion of Czardom stands in the way, and it is being sloughed off as a sickness. Some clearance of obstacles is unavoidable if men are to rebuild. Now this is akin to the frontier situation; but there is this outstanding difference; the wayfarers of the frontier have made their rejections, but lack anything corresponding to the emergent positivism of Russia to fill the vacuum, anything social or collective, anything that will serve as the foundation of a new fellowship. Unless this substitute can be found, they will become individualists and isolationists so far as religion is concerned, each "going it alone." And it is the possibility and hope of such a substitute that is asserted by the fellowship we are setting up to insure the survival of organized religion. We shall therefore follow the path of hope by trying to discern the elements of a latent positivism in the forces that have been speeding malcontents toward our religious frontier.

THE REPUDIATIONS OF THE FRONTIER

And Their Undercurrents of Positive Tendency

It is then with positive intent that we shall weigh the negations and repugnancies that have led to the desertions from orthodoxy. We shall endeavor to reach below them to an implicit positivism that lurks obscurely as their cause.

There is a core of affirmation in negation; as there is a living faith in honest doubt. We may speak either negatively of Anti-Slavery, or positively of Emancipation. That rebellion against the ownership of man by man was in essence an affirmation of the democratic principle of equality. It was a recognition of the dignity and inviolability of the human personality in its potential worth, be the condition, color, or creed what it might. That is to say, revolutions are impliedly battles *for* something as well as *against* something. But to be against is easier than to be for. That is why revolutions have generally been so disappointingly abortive; that is why the struggle for liberty has survived so largely in the negative form of resistance to oppression rather than positively as a demand for those conditions that make a free and full life—not mere existence—possible.

Two examples of what may be called obtuseness in this respect will illustrate. The first is a familiar and trivial story of to-day. There is an organization in this country that has committed the indiscretion of calling itself the Daughters of the American Revolution. It is grotesquely lacking in any hospitality to the revolutionary spirit that girded the battling Fathers of the Republic. It is timid, intolerant, and repressive. The living, positive spirit of freedom is eclipsed by the negative spirit of resistance to change. It is an obstruction. Nothing can live long on its past: it must nurse a budding hope and ambition for the future. Mere memorialism is of the tomb.

The second illustration is more seriously significant: it is that of the critical movement commonly called the Rationalist Movement. Its heyday is past, but its spirit survives on the frontier and has to be reckoned with. It found its popular expression in England in the militant figure of Charles Bradlaugh, who compelled the House of Commons to substitute an affirmation for an oath; and in this country in Robert Ingersoll, a man of larger humanity, who left a deep mark upon thousands of those whom we may call, in no invidious sense, the intellectually lowly of independent mind.

This movement was in the main a movement of clearance. It was bent on discrediting orthodoxy by exposing its errors and absurdities. And it did so, of course, with the positive and laudable purpose of inducing men to base their thinking and, as a consequence, their con-

duct, on reason and sound knowledge. But it halted there. It had no rallying cries; no constructive policies, no program of social transformation. It was too early for the new learning of historical explanations. But it did much to rid us of shams. It did more in removing disabilities, as Bradlaugh did. But the chains struck off, what then? The movement was lacking in social affirmativeness, although John Morley, bred in the school of Mill, made the passage, as Mill finally did, to a positive attitude. Its champions were robust individualists. But the typical rationalist lived largely by his antagonisms. He rejoiced in "going for" things. He called himself a free-thinker; but too often it was in the negative sense of not being bound by anything or to anything prophetic. He survives. He is to be found on the frontier; and he generally elects to cross the frontier. Needless to say, both rationalism and free-thinking must be accredited. Free-thinking is the only kind of thinking there is; and of course to be sound, it must be rational. But without positive social ends it is ineffectual. The type belongs to an expiring past. But we liked its sturdiness and courage; and it supplied ingredients for a religion of courageous veracity.

These animadversions may seem to be retarding; but the purpose we have in hand here must perforce be rather deviously pursued, because so many factors are involved in the complexities of religion; and we cannot hope to find a religion for the future that does not provide for human nature on all its sides and in all its

richness and neediness, emotional and imaginative as well as intellectual.

But the point we drive at is this; that it is largely because the secessionists of the frontier do really care at bottom for values and causes ignored and unchampioned, that the task of the outposts which would check the flow across the frontier must be to offer a religion that breathes with a primal solicitude for the causes of social justice and harmony. Certainly the particular outpost which I shall presently describe has this solicitude; for it aims to make religion codimensional with life, and responsive to all the needs of worthy living.

II

A study of the frontier mind will reveal a variety of types. These people have come out of different kinds of communions and backgrounds. They represent many varieties of emphasis in their rejections, discontents, and disillusions. The best way to assort them will be from the points of view of the leading factors that have led to the disturbances of modern thought. These we will distinguish as the scientific, the historical, and the critical.

We take first the one that has counted most, and yet is the one we shall dismiss most briefly at this point, since we shall meet it later on. It is Science. We shall give it short shrift because we believe that the assumed conflict between science and religion is a falsely conceived conflict. And there are increasing signs that it is beginning to be seen as such. Scientists

like Eddington—and we may add, Einstein—disown the opposition. It becomes clear that science, as such, is not concerned with the right or wrong use of its discoveries—poison gas, for example. That is the business of ethics, which is the heart of the religion we advocate. It is not the province of science to evaluate ideals. Its findings must be consulted in the shaping of ideals; but they will be utilized in the interest of the Highest Good of man in society; and that Highest Good science does not attempt to define. That Good prescribes a task; the task, namely, of transforming things as they are to things as they should be. As to what they should be, science has nothing to say. In other words science supplies data; it is factual: whereas religion is prescriptive and prophetic; it creates ideals, and appraises values as these tend to promote the supreme human end.

Nevertheless the battle between science and religion has been and still is being waged; and one reason is not far to seek. It is because religion has staked its case on the discarded findings of science, the science assumed in the Bible, such as the story of Creation and the Fall of man, with its consequences in the theory of the Atonement, and so on. It clings to an antique cosmology. It has staked its case on miraculous occurrences which, apart from their incredibility, have not spiritual quality and import. If religion chooses to lay down its own science, it must take the consequences. A religion of the spirit will build only upon genuinely spiritual foundations, not on suspected magic,

or legendary history, or the changing theories of science.

We believe that this confusion, and the rejection of religion because of it, can be made clear to the secessionists, and the antithesis between science and religion proved to be a false one. And then the world disclosed by modern science may be envisaged in all its wondrous magnitude, with consequences for real religion that will be greatly beneficial.

There remains, however, another reason for the fear of science shown by orthodox religion, and for the estrangement of those who have followed scientific thought. This is to be found in the very spirit of science itself, its fearless disinterestedness and inquisitiveness; its demand for convincing verification; its exaction of doubt and its exactitudes of proof. Religion can no longer be marked off as immune to this spirit of veracity. Here we strike the positive note. Science has generated this new respect for disinterestedness, verification, and fearlessness.

Much more disquieting, we hold, than science among the influences which have discredited the orthodoxy which these wayfarers of the frontier have renounced, is the second factor we have named; that is, the new history, with its annex, anthropology, which together are unfolding the long epic of Man's Earthly Pilgrimage: History and Pre-history. They expand the life of man to a new and enthralling magnitude. Whatever doubts may be raised as to points in the scientific theory of evolution, there can be none as to the slow evolu-

tion of human life. It is the story of the presence in man of an urge of ascent that has sped him from primitivism to civilization. Moreover, it is the story of his painful and yet elate conquest, inch by inch, of the obstacles that lay in his path; and the development of his mind and resources through his struggle. It is a connected and self-explanatory story, which discards those interventions of managing divinities assumed by the earliest religions, or of a wayward providence that reflects a human accessibility to pleading and praise and sacrifice. It is this enlargement of historic vision that has been fatal to the ideas of the Fall and Original Sin, and all their consequences in the development of religious dogma.

History, with its new and undreamt of evidences of man's long slow conquest of environment, is yielding to thought a new humanity and a new man. A religion adequate to the modern vision must not antagonize these findings of history; and it need not. And that is the message of a religion of Ethics to those on the frontier who have reacted against the old history postulated by religion, with its anachronisms and embroideries. The new story is a more wondrous tale; and it heartens man as the old story did not.

Moreover, it is a story which so assembles and articulates the varied gifts and contributions of the different stems of the human family, racial and regional, that the old Biblical and ecclesiastical idea of an elect race and chosen people, a one and only revelation of the meaning of life, and a one authentic and Catholic

religion and Church, cannot survive; and the frontier mind has been driven to abandon it. The old Hebraic-Christian exclusivism, and the presumption and pride that supported it, cannot live with the larger modern outlook.

A new conception of human totality, composed of diverse contributory elements, is in the field. There is much to learn from slighted types of spiritual excellence. Matthew Arnold tried to offset and complement the regnant Hebraic type of excellence by a plea for the very different Hellenic type. We can to-day go further and do better than he. We are now interrogating the genius of other variants—Hindu, Confucian, Persian, Gothic, Scandinavian, Celtic. This circumspection makes impossible the old inherited ideas about one chosen race and one perfect man. What restricted idea of perfection is it that overlooks the obvious limitations of one whose great genius was nevertheless typically Hebraic? Which again makes clear the fact that, hand in hand with the negations which make for secession, are struggling new births of larger conceptions which must be liberated to become the positives of a new rallying synthesis.

The same reassuring fact holds good in relation to the third and last of the disturbing influences we shall consider, namely, the disclosures of comparative religion and Biblical research. By the first it becomes increasingly clear that the uniqueness claimed for Christian doctrines and practices vanishes; and that much of its historicity has the naïveté of folklore. By the second

is brought to light the obvious overlay of mythological and legendary matter that has obscured the teaching and personality of the commanding and illuminating figure of the great Nazarene. The explanation of these wrappings of Christology is furnished by comparative religion. They have their analogues in other religions, from which they are largely derivative. And the charge that this disencumberment is actuated by a spirit of destructivism is disproved by the persistent and quite reverent quest for the human and historic Jesus as something precious that has been slighted. Even the theologians of the Schools are busily discriminating between the teachings *of* Jesus and the teachings *about* Jesus, and are rationalizing the transmutations wrought by Paulinism, by patristic creedalism and ecclesiasticism, and—coming down the centuries—by the logomachies of Scholasticism and Protestantism.

So that the rejection of the mythological Christ of the churches that have been deserted by the secessionists must be seen in relation to this growing Humanist conviction that something greater and more humanly helpful than the Christ of Christology has been missed, and should be seized and appropriated. An impressive genius has been taken out of our human family, and its human meanings and inspirations confounded and lost by placing it in the sphere of a meaningless and magic-haunted superhumanism. The new spirit, freed of these accretions from many Oriental cults, will claim this historic figure as a flower of the human seed plot—to the glory of man and with the promise

of new unfoldings of our potential humanity. So, once more, when we search below the negations and repudiations of the frontier we come upon a germinal positivism and affirmativism. The emergent truth will be stranger than fiction, more helpful, more poetically as well as more rationally sound and admirable and inspiring.

Therefore we close this brief and partial survey of repudiations on a note of expectation and hope. As the soil is cleared of what this frontier mind regards as weeds and tares that choked the growth, the waiting seeds of a fairer and fuller fruition will sprout into life. Just as the new science has disclosed a vastly more majestic and marvelous universe than was ever before conceived by the mind of man; just as the new psychology has revealed an organism more fearfully and wonderfully made in the subtle interaction of its powers and passions; so the science and art of conduct, with an eye for the refined complexities of character, may give to life and living a depth and range, and may evoke a resonance of response to the touch of life, which announce a new chapter in the history of man.

LIBERATION: A NEW FELLOWSHIP

The Positive Spirit of Ethical Religion

We have now reached the foothill at which we may present from the positive approach the religion offered at the frontier in the outpost dedicated to the Religion of Ethics; by which we mean, not as an effort to salvage remainders of the rejected religions, but as a liberation of the thwarted desire for some sort of freer religious fellowship. Our point of departure was the basic importance of conserving fellowship as against the menace of individualistic detachment. In this sense only can we speak of salvaging the frontier wreckage of broken associations.

And we use the word "liberation" remembering a sentence of Sir Thomas Browne, "That is knowledge which is for our liberation." And we apply it to a situation which recalls the historic fact that religion in the past has been continuously on the defensive against new knowledge, as, for example, the Copernican astronomy and the evolutionary hypothesis. It would be an immense liberation were religion conceived of as having nothing to fear but everything to gain from every advance of verified knowledge, and were its attitude of suspicion converted into one of receptivity and welcome. That would liberate the mind for a freer and deeper breathing.

An ethical religion allows of this liberation. It is constructive: it seeks to build a new edifice for the spirit of man in which there need be no cramping of the mind. This attitude discriminates, as we have intimated, between the aims and functions of science and of ethics. We may reiterate it in changed form. In philosophical terms, ethics is teleological; it postulates an end or *telos,* that of consummating the endeavor to create a perfected association of men in society, covering the whole sphere of human relations. We are back —rather, we are moving forward once again to the Hebraic conception of religion as aiming at the reign of Righteousness; and to the Hellenic conception, in Plato and Aristotle, of the purpose of ethics as the promotion of the Highest Good of man in society. Not that we forget the importance of individualized personality. Any great society will be a society of great and distinctive persons. This aspect of the matter will be dealt with separately. We have now to think of the social whole out of which unique individuals may emerge, provided the conditions of liberation are established.

II

The test of the efficacy of religion is its power to evoke life, meaning the life proper to the soul of man, looking before and after, and dreaming on things to come. And here again we pay homage to the prophet of Galilee, whom we bring into our human family, remembering his assertion that he came that men might

have life, and have it more abundantly. Life and living we have described as the axis upon which religion is to turn. "Think upon living": the phrase is Goethe's; and so is the admonition "to live resolvedly in the Whole, the Good, the Beautiful." And that first word, the Whole, strikes the dominant of this common chord. The keynote is totality. We are to see life whole, and to face it and respond to it out of our total personality, with all its disciplined and organized powers. From which there follows that practical deduction that religion is to be a unifying, integrating, coördinating power circulating through all the interests and activities of living, and determining conduct in business, politics, leisure, and all our social relations. It is not a thing apart: its area is not circumscribed. It has the amplitude of life.

And life: while we think of it in its highest manifestation as the life of mind—as if the universe had become aware of itself in the mind of man—we do not shut off the enveloping consciousness that this life by which we live shares in the life that flows through all things and throbs in our hearts as it pulsates in the motions of the far-off galaxies. "Life's impenetrable agencies, are they not thronging in thy heart and brain?" as Faust expresses the idea. A religion that is focally ethical is not committed to turning its back to this outlook; but it is necessarily centered in the idea of active purpose. *"Que faire?"* What is to be done? What is the human task? The business of religion, as we conceive of it, is to address itself to that. How to

live?—to live together, to realize the Highest Good possible to a society of human beings?

So much it seems necessary to say before we go on, by way of protecting ourselves from the accusation of espousing a restricted mundanism unfriendly to the stars. Let the cosmic setting of the human drama be what it may, our religion holds us to the quest for a way of life, with its counsel, "think upon living"; carrying the conviction that this end may be pursued as the one common and uniting concern of all good men, apart from their views as to the large cosmic issues, the "first and last things" of philosophy. It asks no one of its adherents to close his mind or to be indifferent to these curiosities of the intellect; but it leaves opinion free, knowing moreover that the search for a world-view is never ending, and that its conclusions change with increasing knowledge and experience. The brief statement of the basis of membership in ethical societies declares that they are collectively neutral as to such theories of first and last things. These are the concern of the private life of the individual as distinguished (though not separable) from the public life of religious fellowship and participation. Always we return to the concept of fellowship, the master-purpose of living being conceived of primarily as a social and coöperative enterprise.

III

And so, with this preamble, we proceed to interpret further the religion with which we would intercept the

pilgrims of the frontier before they renounce fellowship for detachment. If our first words to them may be, "All is not lost"; our next may be, "On the contrary, liberation may be won and a new and larger life be gained. See! this sparsely occupied frontier is more spacious. More stars can be seen, and broader dawns and settings. The old fears of the light of expanding knowledge have no place here. The attitude is not retrospective. The past is freely and yet devoutly used to serve the present and the future. The invitation is to an uncompromising intellectual rectitude and consistency, to the most generous give and take of the best that is in everyone for the common enrichment, and to a progressive lifting of the level of excellence."

The parent society of the American Ethical Union has just celebrated the fifty-fifth anniversary of its birth. That birthday, in 1876, fell significantly—as its adherents dare to think—in the centennial year of the Republic's Declaration of Independence. For they interpret the declaration made at its first meeting by its initiator, Felix Adler, as a declaration of independence in the religious world akin to the earlier declaration of political independence. The ground of that high claim is the recognition of its basis of union as in essence the same as that laid down in the political charter. It posits the inalienable—and, as we interpret it—potential-worth and inviolability of the individual. He is to count for one. There are no limiting conditions. He may have any religion, or none. This union in citizen-

ship encircles all other group associations. The cause at stake is the cause of human society, which rests upon the organization of men in a community or polity; the state being, in Aristotle's phrase, prior to the individual.

Ethical religion starts, then, with the axiom of man's intrinsic worth as man. Its basis is reverence for the human personality. No more than the political affirmation does it make explicit the sanctions of this affirmation. It falls back on what I have called the ethical intuition. "A man's a man,"—heretics and all. Sanctions there may be—the metaphysical sanction of a philosopher like Green; the theistic sanction of the Fatherhood of God—or what not; but ethical fellowship does not demand a particular sanction any more than political fellowship demands it. Manhood is the criterion. *"Homo sum"* is the password.

So that the theory is that there may be a religious union parallel with and harmonious with that which unites men under the ægis of the republican state or polity—a religion of Democracy. Its aim will be no less than the pursuit of the human task of creating a society in which human beings may find possible their largest and finest unfolding or fulfillment—"life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," is the language of the charter. Such a religion would have as its inclusive objective, conduct; worthy conduct, right and complete living. And as conduct finds its motivations in character, or the organized personality, the purpose assumes inwardness and calls for an art of the inner life and

the creation, out of the raw materials of individuality, of a socialized personality.

The new religion was called Ethical Culture: and that name reflected the influences of the hour. The word "culture" had been chosen by that connoisseur of words and phrases, Matthew Arnold, who defined it as getting to know the best that has been thought and said in the world, so that it may exert, both consciously and insensibly, a formative influence upon us. It had this connotation in its association with the qualifying word "ethical."

But Arnold's influence, at least with those of us who were near to it, went further than this, inasmuch as he had dared to define religion as "morality touched with emotion." This was in harmony with Emerson's declaration of the sovereignty of ethics. Both these men, different as they are, were coöperant influences. Arnold has acknowledged his indebtedness to Emerson. His was one of the "voices" that spoke to the young Englishman at Oxford, as he has attractively testified in his American address on Emerson. There was a difference, however; and we may venture, at the risk of a charge of pedantry, to identify it with the difference between "morals" and "ethics."

IV

To this distinction we shall have to devote a separate chapter, rounding this one out on the note with which we began, the note of liberation. We would accent the fact that it is a liberation by simplification, delivering

us from a multitude of opinions and doctrines, as the author of *The Imitation* puts it; much as monotheism delivered man from a multitude of divinities; and the prophets, including the greatest of them, delivered him, or would have delivered him, from a multitude of observances and ceremonials.

One of the tragedies of religious history is that again and again the great leaders of men have sought this disencumbrance of religion so that it might be a religion of the spirit, pure and undefiled; and that, again and again, their followers have soon lapsed into the idolatries and externalities from which these lofty souls tried to wean them. "They must have their forms!" remarks Faure in his *History of Art,* referring to the relapse both of Buddhism and of Christianity into the lavish adornments of worship and the elaborations of ritual. It is to another attempt to disengage what is inward from the swathings of doctrine and ritual that ethical religion would summon men. Liberation! Simplification!

And another tragedy of the record is the enlistment of hate and cruelty in the enforcement of doctrines arrogantly held to be necessary to salvation. The chronicle of religious event is stained with blood and tears drawn by this abominable compulsion. It is a pitiful and revolting record this, which identifies religion with the bloody compulsions of dogmatic violence. Surely that story, which reëchoes the cries of the tortured, should convince men that religion is not a matter of doctrines and creeds, backed by the pretensions of

those who acclaim themselves as the sole custodians of them and the instruments of their inhuman enforcement. It is clear from the record that over and over again dogmas have corrupted and devastated the hearts of men. When doctrines of eternal punishment, involving the everlasting torture of unbaptized infants, are entertained by holy fathers, we ask, What matters what they believed when their hearts were poisoned with cruelty?

Liberation from such horrors, rooted in a fanaticism of creed! Liberation from the still lingering spirit of bigotry and all uncharitableness! Liberation from the infidelity that places the creed before the life; the infidelity that reverses the teaching of the prime, that he who would know the true doctrine must first live the true life; that the tree shall be judged by its fruits; that there can be no love of God that is not rooted in the prior love of one's neighbor!

Such is the background of historic fact upon which an ethical religion projects itself. Such is the historic past from the inhumanities of which it would liberate religion.

And the testimony of the frontier is that the increasing knowledge of the past which is unveiling the hushed facts—the heresy-hunting, the Inquisitions, the Jew-baitings, the Bartholomew massacres, the savageries of Protestantism and Catholicism alike—leads not a few to feel cold toward the words "religion" and "religious." They have too many dishonoring associations. And out of these repulsions comes the craving

to be worthy, not of the title "religious," but of the simple title "human," as deserving the trust and love of all sorts and conditions of men, a passport to the common heart of the simple. Therein lies the secret of the wide response to the lovers of men, to a human-hearted Jesus or a child-hearted Francis of Assisi.

PART II

ORIENTATIONS

INTRODUCTORY: CONCERNING WORDS

It was on a first visit to Concord that I was told the story, *à propos* of the friendly relations between Father Taylor and Emerson, of how when the former was asked whether he thought Emerson would not have to go to hell, replied that if he did, the tide of emigration would likely turn that way. The story is symptomatic of the week-day spirit that has been tempering men's Sunday opinions. Men are no longer to be assorted according to their church creeds. They meet in their Civic and Welfare Committees above the plane of denominational and racial differences—Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Negro, Hindu, agnostic, atheist. The touchstone then is character, the human quality; and increasingly men are standing by this larger attitude, and do not allow themselves to be drawn back to their contracted Sunday selves.

"Virtue is its own reward": there is another tribute of popular wisdom; and it is a tribute that is versed by John Milton in the lines:

> Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
> By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
> Were in the flat sea sunk.

So does the soul of man speak when it escapes from creedal narrowness; when it forgets its tribal, national and sectarian banners; when it is its best self. Virtue

its own light and its own reward! Why is not this the corner stone of our edifice of wisdom? Why do we tie up virtue with rewards and punishments, heaven and hell? Why do we condition it by beliefs?

At any rate the doctrine of the self-sufficiency and independence of virtue is clearly no new and startling idea. But we are prone to become the fools of words, and to give them partisan and sectarian meanings! Why do men sneer at "mere morality"? Would they speak of "mere virtue"? The answer may be that we do in fact discriminate between the two words. Bernard Shaw evidently did so when he spurned the word "morality" and championed the word "virtue." So do we find ourselves called upon to discriminate between the words "moral" and "ethical." Our word "ethical" is to be understood in the spirit of that Miltonic tribute to Virtue and as implying its independence and self-authentication.

May we not remind the reader that accurate thinking began with the study of words? Socrates, frequenting the market place, found the main source of mental confusion in men's loose handling of words. The first step toward clearness lay in the definition of terms, especially those general terms, such as "justice," that are most influential in determining our mental orientation. But in trying to come to a better understanding of the words upon which our discussion will turn, we shall not be trying for definitional exactness so much as for the broader connotative significance of these general and flexible terms in their modern setting.

They are to get their meaning in their context, and by it.

It is by way of promoting hospitality to the idea of the independence and—going further—the sovereignty of the ethical intuition, that we may introduce our theme by using this concept of virtue to project our thought. Shaw doubtless liked the word because it suggests a Roman feeling for "manliness"; there is something bracing about it. But what is virtue, if we look into its historic meanings? Virtue, said the great Greek, the founder of the science of ethics, is knowledge; it springs from the desire to know, to see. No, said the Jew, the Nazarene; the root of virtue is love. And then the great apostle develops the conflict between these two—knowledge and loyalty to it. "What I would, that I do not: the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." To know does not always mean acting accordingly: a stronger motivation is needed. But Socrates' successor, Plato, proceeded to invest virtue with the constraining power of beauty; and it became the beautiful-good. In turn his successor introduced the idea of proportion, and promulgated the doctrine of the golden mean. And so it went on. Virtue drew to it many ancillary qualities; and when we get down to the moderns, we find them to-day defining it as organized and disciplined personality.

It is this large and organic view that we shall take. No other could serve the purpose of a religion of ethics. And we may appeal to other supports; as, for instance, the more modern view of the logicians that the test

of truth is not of the older formalistic sort; it is consistency and coherence. A proposition is *prima facie* true if it will fit into the body of truth which constitutes the world of our mind: it is false if it will not consist or cohere with other accepted truth. Of course it may turn out to be true and to compel readjustments; but eventual harmony will be the test.

The word we have already used to indicate this point of view is totality or wholeness, which implies the consistency and coherence, the harmony, just mentioned. And it allies itself with other words, integrity, sincerity, candor, and the courage required in the exercise of these virtues. Nothing is more discouraging than the writhings of religious apologists facing this demand for consistency. The text, "*the* truth shall make you free," for them seems to mean not truth, but some particular truth, their truth. Father Tyrrell has some pertinent words in this relation. "Of what avail is it," he asks in effect, "to dethrone one pet truth to put another in its place, to be the object of the same kind of idolatry?" Only "the spirit of truthfulness" can save us. Truth may make us free, but freedom is in turn the condition of truth.

Our introductory purpose will be accomplished if we have opened the way for our axiomatic view that virtue (or ethics) is a complex, like the character by which men really appraise one another. It is the general *tone* of character that counts; and into that tone enter the undertones and overtones contributed by the love of veracity and consistency, of beauty, of heroism and jus-

tice and much else. The motivations are many, and they are inter-related. Ethics is not a prettily patterned diagram of relations. It is not a matter of intellectualism merely. It is not, as philosophy has so frequently been in the past, something in the flat, a *tabula—tabula rasa,* in Locke's phrase; but it is also a world of forces, desires, appetites, admirations, driving and eruptive, with their "lightnings of primitive energy." We have been trying to make over education in the light of this conception of activism, with its policy of learning by doing rather than by receiving. We must conceive of ethics in the same way, as centering in the creative activity of conduct; man in action, trying to know himself and handle himself and to create his character out of what is revealed to him by the strivings of conduct. We shall, then, devote a few chapters to elucidating some of our leading concepts and to giving them aspect and color.

ETHICAL, NOT MORAL

Man's Character as His Destiny

Words carry connotations, color, climate. "Morality" associates itself with conformities, rules, laws, compulsions; "ethics," with character values and the impulsions and controls of personality. "That man has character," we say, or "is a character," meaning that he has a savor of distinctive quality or individuality. Only when the word "ethical" is understood in this deeper-going dynamic sense can the designation Ethical Religion receive its due. The word suggests a life force expressing itself in all the traits and ways that constitute individuality. It will include the emotional urges of desire and aspiration, of admiration, hope, and love, comprised in the fullness of an organized and disciplined yet energized and outflowing personality. The roots of character lie in the emotions. "Out of the heart are the issues of life," because the heart is the seat, as it were, of the loves and hates, the likes and dislikes, the preferences and aversions, that tend to use us for their satisfaction.

That was the doctrine of Plato, for whom education meant fundamentally the determination and disciplining of these propulsions of love and hate. For that reason Ruskin hailed Wordsworth as a sound Platonist when he declared that "we live by admiration, hope, and love." And it furnishes the key to Ethical Religion as

aiming at the formation of the character by reaching and developing and disciplining these urgings so that they produce right conduct. It would reckon with the ultimate profundities of human nature.

It was an earlier Greek sage who said that man's destiny was his *ethos,* or character: and that is a very deep saying. It illuminates that other saying, that love is blind; which means, I take it, that a passionate love in a man's heart is like the hand of fate upon him—the theme of an *Antigone* or a *Romeo and Juliet.* A man cannot love or cease to love at command, any more than he can admire or cease to admire at will. For the time being we are helpless in the grasp of our established desires and preferences. They can only be altered by heeding some check of the mind which passes upon the values or worths of the objects that have kindled them; which may lead us to submit ourselves patiently and trustfully to those things and persons perceived to be nobler and higher. We must let them have their way with us, so that in time increasing hospitality to their influence becomes a spontaneous responsiveness to their appeal. That is Dante's theme in the *Purgatorio.* Impulsive love must be transformed to the "love intellectual," which is made possible by a growing perception of "the good of the intellect."

This may seem to be going far afield; but we make this seeming digression in the interest of getting into the content of the word "ethical" the meanings it is intended to have in its alliance with the word "religion." It should take us far from what is ordinarily under-

stood by "morality," "mores," customs, conventions. Once more, and in this connection, ethical religion aims to liberate us from the menacing fatality of our native appetites and passions by submitting them to the visions and persuasions of the mind, set on an ideal of virtue and swayed by the "love intellectual" that submits itself to "the good of the intellect." Our religion, in other words, is to bring us under the spell and constraint of the values by which alone men can live harmoniously together in the service of the common good.

These ethical values are not remote and recondite. They are generally recognized by even partially civilized people as truth or truthfulness, justice, and good will. Our religion must help us to maintain and increase responsiveness to these values. They are self-commending and self-authenticating. And that is what is meant by the independence of ethics or the ethical intuition, and by setting up ethical perfection as the ultimate goal and ideal for religion to aim at. No God can authenticate these values; for there is nothing more ultimate by virtue of which they can be authenticated. Like Beauty, they are their own excuse for being. They live by the spell they exercise on the souls of men.

We may return to Matthew Arnold as a foil, fully recognizing however his positive serviceableness in changing the axis of religion from theology to morality in association with his advocacy of culture. What has been said above accords with Arnold's conviction that the way to change ourselves for the better is to submit ourselves to the Best, so that the level of our

standards and tastes may insensibly be lifted. It is not a process of argumentation; but something deeper. Slowly we find ourselves weaned from our old attachments: they will not stand the test of the new admirations begotten of our contacts with what is really first-rate. And this is the test he actually applies in the sphere of religion, defined by him as "morality touched with emotion"; for by this he means moral truth stated with that heightening, that depth of feeling and earnestness, that imaginative power which gives it the quality of Best, the touch of greatness akin to the quality of great poetry. We should say that in effect he lifts the "moral" to the plane of the ethical because it has a more powerfully evocative effect. It enlists the emotions. And it is this quality of elevation that is present in the greatest deliverances of the greatest teachers.

But Arnold stops short, and lapses into the lesser sphere of morals. This is apparent when he mechanically or mathematically makes conduct, as the subject matter of religion, a fractional "three-fourths of life," assigning the other fourth to other interests, such as art, manners. Here he breaks with the conception of ethics for which we plead as involving the totality and unity of character. All intelligent action is conduct. A man's demeanor in the presence of beauty, or his handling of beautiful things, is conduct. Manners are of course conduct. The ghost of morality still haunts Arnold's treatment.

And he is led into other troubles; and one was suggested by our allusion to theology. Arnold has to meet

the awkward question, If religion is morality touched with emotion, then what becomes of God? And then we see a man who confessedly is no metaphysician perpetrating a muddled metaphysic by attempting to define "God" as "the eternal not-ourselves." Ethics does not take us voyaging in the region of not-ourselves; it is concerned with that sufficiently profound fact of selfhood, character, personality. Within that lies the mystery of spiritual power. If there is in it any element of not-self, or superself, or deity, that will be registered in the conduct; the conduct, let us say, of the men of genius who "build better than they know," of whom common language speaks as "inspired." We are still in the domain of ethics, which covers all conduct and the whole of character, no matter what our metaphysics may say as to the nature of the power or the consciousness by which it operates.

It should be repeated, then, that Ethical Religion, seeking a common denominator in human nature as a basis of fellowship, finds it in the practical objective of conduct conceived of in this wide way as covering the whole of human relations and as having its dynamic and its controls in character as we have described it. The registrations of character being in conduct, and conduct being the test of character, right conduct—right living, a full, worthy, controlled responsiveness to the challenges and constraints of experience and human converse—becomes the primal solicitude and the ever-beckoning ideal of Ethical Religion.

Many questions, which would be pressed by those

who would rejoice to demonstrate the inadequacy of such an outlook upon religion, and the need after all is said, of the old props, will remain to be dealt with. Answers to most of them will be implicit in the positions we have championed. For example, self-determination—with reservations—is assumed. We are not puppets; and this life of ours is not a puppet show. The existence of what we call evil is postulated in the very conception of ethics as the subjugation of the natural by the ethical.

We come back, then, to the conception of ethics as the study of right conduct, covering all the activities of men; and as determined by all the forces of character, rightly disciplined and organized. Understood as such, the word "ethical" will have a range and depth and resonance which the word "moral" has not. Link with it the word "religion," and we further intensify it, and suggest that supreme devotion and concentration of purpose which this word still commonly connotes.

YOUTH ON THE FRONTIER

WHAT we shall briefly say on this subject connects closely with the theme of the preceding chapter; and we are led to add it because if there is one contemporary "need" that proclaims itself and challenges any religion that would meet the modern situation, it is the present need of the large number of young people who frequent the frontier.

And there is the particular and pertinent reason which we shall frankly state, namely, the fact that it is peculiarly among young people that the word "ethical" is under suspicion, just because they think it means "moral"; and that word, they assume, stands for all the thou-shalt-nots inscribed on mossy decalogues of stone and dry parchments of rules and regulations.

If religion is a gospel of life, it must strike the note of life for the young, and waylay them by its promise of life more abundant for them. It must keep all men young and be a fountain of perpetual youth. Here is a test to be met.

But it may be said that the youth of to-day are not in a natural and normal state of mind and emotion. They—or at least those whom we style the "intellectuals" or the "intelligenzia"—are in a state of revolt. This revolt of youth is a fruit of the war. The feeling which the war bred in youth was that they had been trapped and sacrificed in a cause represented as

"holy." They found themselves betrayed. It had been trumpeted as the War to end War, and to save Democracy. The event led to no such results: they were forgotten. Instead, it led on to the fear of another war, to increased armaments in defiance of general bankruptcy, to Fascism and battling Communism. Youth drew its conclusion; there was something false and hypocritical in the morality that had sacrificed the youth of the world on its smoking altars of failure. They would cast these things from them. They would go their own better way, the way of freedom and friendliness. They would rally the youth of the world to the recognition of a common cause by war-resistance and pledges of coöperation. So they too gathered on the frontier.

The flame of that early indignation and resolve has dwindled. Indignation is seldom a lasting fuel. Youthful vision failed, as one might expect it would; it lacked constructive ideas. It became antinomian. The repressed senses, at any rate, should have their liberation. The result has been an outburst of sexism, which the forces of gain have commercialized. Youth has never been so sexually nagged and incited before. We have been living in a sex-haunted and sex-obsessed period. What else was there for youth to live for?

What these facts lead us to recognize is that "morality," identified with the pre-war moralism which issued in that cataclysm, is under the ban. It has soured to the taste of these youths. It is identified with prescription and inhibition and repression; with "moralizing" and sermonizing, and indoctrination; with rules and conven-

tions not believed in. A New Morality has been noisily announced; but "morality," we have agreed, does not go deep enough.

Ethics should rescue us all, and them, from this predicament; for ethics, as we have contended, bases itself on a recognition of all the forces that are involved in the making and marring of character. It stresses the fact that the development of character involves, not the repression, but the transmutation and integration of these forces under the control of intelligence focused upon a rationalized ideal of social life.

Ethics starts with the taste for health and wholesomeness. It would direct the natural impulsions of the young upon right and promising objectives; proper outlets for the senses; keen interests; absorbing activities. It waits upon the emergent instincts and urges, catches them, and involves them in the growing interests and curiosities of the mind. It enlists the sense of beauty by directing it upon really beautiful objects. It deals delicately with the sense of reserve and privacy. It avoids preachiness and triteness. It is forever tempting experience to find satisfactions in keener and finer appreciations; in building up likings and preferences and admirations that are self-commending, have no taint, no back-fire, no regrets. It works the mind into the senses to establish right values. In short, ethics is formative, nurturing. It regards the soil; keeps it tilled, irrigated, fertilized, cultivated, cultured. Yes, "culture" is the word; ethical culture, not moralization.

Let us, for our one concrete illustration, take the

word that designates what has been called "the greatest thing in the world"—as it surely is—"love." No word is more grossly abused and vulgarized. None is more equivocal. What meaning do we give it, or load it with, as we present it to the young? What does it mean for the "moralist"? What has it meant for some types of religion? In St. Paul's use of it in relation to marriage? In the marriage ritual? Not what it means for Shakespeare in that great sonnet of his:

> Let us not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> That alters when it alteration finds . . .

It is reduced in common parlance to a liking, a fancy, an infatuation, for somebody. Is this the love that is stronger than death? Is this the "lord of terrible aspect"? We trifle. We mean little more than sexual attraction. For ethics love means the "love intellectual" of a Dante. It enlists the mind. It is a transmutation of a physically based thing into a spiritual quality by enlisting the higher powers of the nature —reverence, admiration, constancy; it raises that quality to a higher power. It is a fruition of the character as a whole. At least, such is the ideal. And we should reserve the word for its true meaning and application; and not bandy it about as if forsooth it were synonymous with sex. The looseness has plunged us into the mire of materialism—levity, irresponsibility, inconstancy, indecency. An Ethical Religion will restore the word to mean what will include the love of a father or

mother for a child, and that child's returned affection; a man's love of a friend; a lover's for his beloved. The modern plea for trial marriage, companionate marriage, is not even a deplored concession; it is a cheap, flaunted surrender to man's second- or third-rate self.

So "ethics" is to mean to youth, as to age, the interrelation and interplay of all those subtly interdependent powers of sense and soul, of intellect and emotion, of reason and imagination which go to the make-up of character; disciplined—yes, firmly disciplined and organized character, whereof the fruit is to be masterful personality expressed in right conduct. The new religious fellowship will not be a "moral" fellowship. An Ethical Society will not be a Moral Society. That would recall the Old Dispensation with its doctrinaire creeds, its stiff literalisms, its sermons. The frontier has left all this behind. But it has not left behind the austerities of thought. It has a renewed respect for the piety of the intellect; but it requires that the conclusions of the intellect shall have their setting and affiliation with those emotional preferences and admirations which determine the employment of the intellect. The heart must be right, and imagination must be actively right. Its keynote is Whole-some-ness.

FELLOWSHIP AND SOLITARINESS

And the Maintenance of Diversity

We choose the term "solitariness" as the most provocative foil to our word "fellowship," upon which our discussion has centered. It is used by Professor A. N. Whitehead in his *Religion in the Making* as the essential fact of religion. "Religion," he says, "is what the individual does with his own solitariness"; a doctrine which "is the direct negation of the theory that religion is primarily a social fact." And, he goes on, "you cannot abstract society from man . . . but all collective emotions leave untouched the awful ultimate fact, which is the human being, consciously alone with itself, for its own sake." This seems to us upside-down; but the general position doubtless accords with the prevailing notion that religion seeks the communion of the simple soul, in its solitariness, with its God; and that all its auxiliaries are to aid this consummation. This looks like the antithesis to our plea for fellowship as the heart of religion. Let us see.

The position, we contend, reverses the order of priority. Instead of saying, "You cannot abstract society from man," we should rather affirm that you cannot abstract man from society. The solitary human being is a fiction. He is not to be found. We are postulating an unreality. Man is essentially social in his

nature, is always found in a society, and can only be explained in terms of his social relationships and history. Just as, in Aristotle's terms, the state is prior to the individual, so is society prior to the units that constitute it and are born into it. And our distinguished author's bleak, and certainly "awful," conception of the human being "consciously alone with itself for its own sake" substitutes an ideal of self-sufficient loneliness and self-contemplation for one of social purpose, genial coöperation, mutual enrichment, and indeed warm human love and sympathy. Life is for solitariness: life is for love; there is a discrepancy here. How can we resolve the discord? Our answer will be, in brief, an appraisal of solitariness in terms of its value as an aid to right living and growing. Our norm is to be, not the solitary-minded but the social-minded person; and he will include the valid kind of solitary-mindedness.

We must cut a wider swath in the field of thinking so as to bring the issue into vital and pertinent connection with those "human needs and interests," the neglect of which was stressed in Professor Montague's diagnosis of our religious malady. We shall start by converting "solitariness" into "individuality"; and thus we touch a need that is very real, namely, the need in these days of mass movement and mass opinion of maintaining individuality in its distinctiveness and uniqueness against the encroachments of gregariousness and averagism. Which means that fellowship in the religious life must not menace this virtue of person-

alism, but must rather foster it. There is a sense, then, in which a certain kind of solitariness, or self-containment, is needed as a defense against the inroads of a certain kind of sociability or submissiveness to social pressure and social uniformity.

This conversion of terms may seem abrupt; and we may mediate it by changing "solitariness" for its cognate, "solitude." This is easier ground. The need of solitude is obvious. We may recall Emerson's statement of it: "We need such a solitude as will hold us to its revelations when we are in society." Here the social office of solitude is clear: it is a ministry to social life, to keep it wholesome. It is to help us to maintain the integrity and savor of personality; and when that is difficult, as it is to-day, our religion, as the ruling power in our lives, ought to help us. And this will be possible if by fellowship we understand—as we do—a fellowship that asks for the contribution of the enriching diversities of its members. It is by the interaction, the give and take, of diversities that life is quickened and enlarged.

We may be charged with disposing too summarily of the idea of solitude. We readily admit that this is not all that is involved in solitude. Even Emerson refers to it as having its revelations. For what are these revelations? They include the revelations of a man to himself. This is the solitude of self-communion, whereby a man "comes to himself" and knows himself. It is a dialogue of the two voices of examiner and examined; which need not, however, be interpreted in

Whitehead's fashion. But a further excursion along this path would lead us too far from our highway.

II

We postpone the development of this thesis, of the social serviceableness of solitariness, to return first to Professor Whitehead's point of view, which we would not dismiss without trying to do justice to it, seeing that it is to be identified, in some degree at least, with the common conception of religion as seeking its goal in the mystical union of the soul with God. Its affinities are with mysticism; and we are well aware that a serious charge against such a religion of fellowship as we champion is that it is wanting in this crowning experience of religious ecstasy or mystical fruition.

Our sympathies go out toward mysticism for a reason we have urged in favor of Ethical Religion—strange as that may seem—namely, its inwardness. It, too, has sought an escape from those trappings and those elaborations of doctrine which we condemned as distractions and obscurations. It has always moved toward simplification and away from a "multitude of opinions," as well as a multitude of gestures and rituals. It was mysticism that, significantly enough, fascinated so modern a mind as William James; as his *Varieties of Religious Experience* attests; and we understand why. The great mystics are the most interesting and refreshing figures in religious history. They are fountains in the desert of formalism; and that is so whether it be a Christian À Kempis or a Humanist Spinoza.

They postulate the consciousness of a divine presence in the soul of man; a divine companionship—although that phrase will scarcely apply to a Spinoza or an Emerson or a Goethe, whose idea of deity transcends that of personality.

And James was a modern in recognizing sundry modern forms in which this ecstatic experience declares itself. It lingers in the "cosmic consciousness" which one exponent finds in Walt Whitman, and in Whitman's descendant (although he is more than that), Edward Carpenter, whose fellow-countryman, Havelock Ellis, also reflects the tendency to make room for an effluence of the sum of things visiting the soul of man. We may go back, of course, to find it in varying phases in Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, Browning. And there is perhaps no more poignantly modern expression of it than in those lines of Clough's *Dipsychus,* when turning upon all the disappointing satisfactions of his longing, he breaks forth into the lyric cry:

> Oh, let me love my love unto myself alone,
> And know my knowledge to the world unknown;
> No witness to the vision call,
> Beholding, unbeheld of all;
> And worship thee, with thee withdrawn, apart,
> Whoe'er, whate'er thou art,
> Within the closest veil of mine own inmost heart.

Here clearly is a form of experience that is not to be restricted to any one type of religious belief, but is found in many religions. And it is not to be regarded as involving any such doctrine of "solitariness" as

Whitehead advocates. It has at times taken the form of an "enthusiasm of humanity," born of an intense love of man. In Wordsworth's case it was evoked in the presence of Nature: the "presence that disturbed him with the joy of elevated thoughts" and "the sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused"; so that "laid asleep in body, he became a living soul." It is an intense form of personal experience; and may be the fruit of a fusion of deep living and high sensibility; and it may come to any of us as happy thoughts or inspirations come, or when we "excel ourselves" and are surprised, knowing not how it happened. It is, in general, a heightening of the sense of being; and therefore it may be linked with that consciousness of a deeper and wider selfhood and accession of individual power. We cannot go into qualitative distinctions here, because it would take us beyond our bounds.

III

Now, for the bearing of this upon such a conception of fellowship in an Ethical Religion as we have been supporting. That conception postulates neutrality. It calls for no exclusion nor unfriendliness toward any experiences of this kind, nor any interpretations of them, short of affecting the values and validities of the conduct that makes for worthy and harmonious living. If such interpretations of mystical experience impel a man to a more limited religious association with others who also entertain them, he may conclude to unite with them in a new cult or group, which will be sectarian in cut-

ting itself off from a large fellowship of the unlike. Or he may remain in the larger fellowship of diversified types for the sake of the greater inclusiveness that ensures a wider range of contacts and of sympathy. The test, we say, would come in the effects of his particular belief upon conduct. That must have the first place. And this is the crux of the matter—whether this supreme regard for right conduct, for worthy and open living demanding reverence for other personalities in their potential worth and their best possibilities, whether this has the first place in his heart and his endeavor. Loyalty to one's fellows and the human task, carrying with it loyalty to those virtues of truth and justice and integrity which are the conditions of human welfare, must be his first solicitude; and all his beliefs must be brought to that ethical touchstone.

Such is the answer to the charge that a social-minded religion of ethical fellowship allows no place nor recognition for the mystical bent in human nature. Such a fellowship, we repeat, is collectively neutral as to all those complementary views and attitudes which its members may favor beyond the margin of the common denominator of conduct, in our large sense of the word. And this is the very interest of diversity and growth. If a member should press his private view into the first place, he would be self-excluding. He would become sectarian. He would forsake the conviction that it is desirable to protect oneself against finality and fixation and the conceit of exclusivism; he would relinquish the ideal of unity in difference, of breadth with

depth, of open-minded and tolerant converse with other types of mentality. He has given the first place to something else.

The position implies a fine regard for the subtle complexities of character. Character operates from different centers or *foci* of dominating interest, as men are variously gifted and sensitive. Here is a man of the æsthetic type; sensibility to beauty is his leading trait. He will be suspected by the moralistic, the utilitarian, the reforming and humanitarian types; as they will be suspected by him. He may be stampeded by his eager responsiveness, as they by theirs. Each is to be saved by a proper coördination or integration of his interest and participation in the Whole. The idea of totality, allowing a wide range of diversity, for which his fellowship stands, is to steady and orientate him, and to give balance and proportion to his outlook and attitude. Nothing too much. The excesses of the mystical type are written large, as are those of the æsthetic type, on the pages of history. They cannot be allowed free rein regardless of the claims of other sides and endowments of human nature. Thou shalt "live resolvedly in the Whole," is the first commandment. Our fellowship is a committal to that counsel; a counsel of perfection; the voice of that wisdom of life that is more to be desired than all other riches. Wisdom is the last word. And, recurring to "needs," how great is that need in an age of cleverness and specialized expertness! And wisdom, meditating the philosophies and systems and cults, perceives their inadequacy, not in what they offer but in

what they omit. They fail to provide for human nature in the fullness and fineness of its totality.

IV

How far we have come from "solitariness," a thin solo performance beside the fully orchestrated symphony of human life! But it served as a point of departure; and we now return to it to make our closing reckoning with that urgent contemporary need which must be one of the vitalizing challenges to any religion that is to be a functioning force in our lives to-day. Let us call it the need of leadership, of powerful personalities who by their independence and daring vision shall give tone and elevation to our common life. Democracy must produce its aristocracy or stagnate. Religion must aim at that definitely. It must relieve us from the condition of bankruptcy in which we find ourselves to-day. The places of leadership are occupied by men of small stature who have succumbed to the pressure of mass influence. The mass movement of groups and parties and interests signifies the increasing collectivity or corporateness of our industrial life; and it is muffling or extinguishing outspoken independence and aggressive individuality. The symptom is the dearth of leadership, of individual superiorities, individual prowess and distinctive personalism. Mediocrity rules in political and social affairs: its blight is upon us. This may be temporary; but it may signify the steady downward pull of the equalitarianism of the crowd.

What is to be done? Are we to be fatalists, the mute

victims of an evolutionary process in which mass mediocrity must extinguish an aristocracy of eminence? Somewhere the light and flame of an ideal of individual perfection must burn. There must be some shrine where men gather to renew "the sentiment of the ideal life"; and their pilgrimage to it must be frequent and calendared; for the ruts of inertia and indifference are deep. The war upon habit must become a habit, and not a fitful and moody indulgence.

The shrine to which we are bidden is one where there is such regard for the differentials of personality and such a respect for freedom of opinion and growth that there are no exactions of creed and no expectations of conformity to any one philosophy. Instead there is a devotion to the Best, and a recognition of the aristocracy of the great spirits of the race and their greatest achievements; and therefore an atmosphere in which the best is evoked and nurtured. Spiritual distinction is sought; and in the wide field of character an ethical distinction is possible for all. "It is the noble people that makes the noble government": heroes are begotten by being ourselves of heroic mind, as Carlyle put it. So our fellowship will express a qualitative aspiration. Its unity will be the choral unity of many diverse voices attuned to the pitch and tonality required for a noble anthem of the common life.

FELLOWSHIP AND WORSHIP

It may be said, I think, that for most of these estrays on the religious frontier the days of sacerdotalism and sacramentalism are gone for good. The typical secessionist would be inclined to say to any one of the variedly vestured pastors and priests of the churches, "Brother, if you will divest yourself of those quaint garments that set you apart from the rest of us, and will talk to me, man to man, out of whatsoever first-hand vision and hard-earned wisdom you possess, I shall be eager to listen. What you have learned by hearsay is not what I seek." Nothing authoritarian or canonical will serve. The words must be alive with living personal conviction; they must come, new-minted from the mind and heart of a person. Hence the religious leader—or whatever the functionary may be called—in the fellowship of the future must be the man or woman who is exceptionally gifted with a wisdom that has no airs of pretentiousness, is modest, and speaks simply out of rich stores of knowledge and a sympathetic and imaginative understanding of the human personality. The day of ornate oratory is past, because of a new hunger for the simple reality of personal testimony.

The same may be said as to the collective celebration of fellowship. It will be simple, and not august, as if

weighting the scales with the accessories of external impressiveness. It will be somewhat Quakerlike or Doric, with such adjuncts of suggestive beauty only as may heighten the tone without distracting the attentive mind. For those who are alertly sensitive to beauty or music, powerful appeals of beauty *must* be distracting. Magnificence has its place; but it is not with religion, as we conceive it. In other words, elaborate ritual will go the way of priestly investiture and priestly rhetoric. The setting must not dwarf or stun the participants. It is their inward vision that must be helped: and for that, concentration is the essential. In this mood of focalized attention life in its unity and totality is to be a recovered reality. The scattered, fragmentary, and distracted self of daily routine and trivial diversion is to be reknit and made whole. The process of outward-going concern with a multitude of externalities is to be reversed; there is to be a return movement toward the center. The mind is its own place. Its splendor is its inward richness.

But this act of self-collection is to be performed with others. We are in the presence; the presence of companion personalities and fellow voyagers. And this communion is to awaken the consciousness of that larger social selfhood which is the real self. Fellowship means that; is the visible symbol of it. We live in and through our relations with others; and the sense of this relationship is to dominate us as we gather together. We really are members one of another in a corporate humanity; and we are to participate in a collective con-

sciousness of the common life that breathes around us. The assemblage "makes the many one"—the phrase is George Eliot's.

And, by virtue of the remembering imagination, the "many" become the companionate host of humanity, the great and the lowly who have trodden the highway of the human advance. "Heard are the voices"; and seen on the mind's screen of the past are the heroes and leaders, the cloud of witnesses, the faithful and fearless. And yet other voices are heard, those of the conquered and suffering, the enslaved and smitten, that cry aloud for those who are still fettered and downtrodden. To be quickened thus, to feel circulating in us the life-current of humanity; to vision the drama of man, on the stage of which we ourselves are now the actors—that is what the celebration of fellowship may well mean and may strive to become.

There may be rare natures who can achieve this merging and enlargement of life without participation in such a rite of assemblage. For most of us the actual experience is necessary periodically to maintain and intensify the inner mood. How the occasion shall be provided, and with what simple yet effective art of management, will tax the finest tact. What is too much for some natures, is too little for others.

II

Our Ethical Societies are still in the experimental stage. They vary in their practice; and mainly because the celebrants vary so much, and because there is a

danger of routine and fixation. But certain procedures have developed in answer to prevailing desires; and these are the clues that will have to be followed in devising "services" in the future. The frontier mind is still trying to find itself and its orientations. It is an amusing bit of history which records that the suspicion of sacerdotal usage was such that there was—not so long ago either—strong protest even against "passing the plate" for offerings; and, following this uncomfortable innovation, there was a gusty revolt against singing a congregational song. This is symptomatic of the frontier attitude in the past of many of those converts who have been won over intellectually to the Ethical Movement. It is too young yet to make regulations. It must grow in self-knowledge; and it must, by its very nature, avoid standardization. Its ways must remain flexible and fluent. One may recall the lines from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh,* a now neglected glory of song that sings the new dawn:

> Let me think
> Of forms less and the external. Trust the spirit,
> As sovran nature does, to make the form;
> For otherwise we only imprison spirit
> And not embody. Inward evermore
> To outward—so in life, and so in art,
> Which still is life.

The spirit must make the form; and the spirit bloweth where it listeth. At present it blows in the direction of one or two felt needs. In particularizing, I try to bring principles to the concrete test. The first need

dictates that the spokesman's address shall be the main item of the program; that it shall be in the nature of a personal communication from one of "ourselves" to the rest, made with perfect freedom of self-expression, committing no one but the speaker, and designed primarily to stir and challenge other minds by throwing each back upon itself for its better clarification, and if possible for that "catharsis" or purgation of the emotions which is the purpose of all forms of art. It must be inspirational; the speaker must in a sense live his best life through his utterance of its best moments in thought, so as to evoke life in his hearers. That is the difficult ideal: life calling to life.

Next comes some music as an aid to the heightened tone or atmosphere desired; instrumental music that speaks all languages. To which has been added, in the societies which have overcome the antichurch bias, a simple congregational song; mainly as a gesture of participation, a symbol of the choral purpose of the meeting.

A reading is introduced to serve several ends. It is a contact with high excellence and beauty, from a great book, preference being given to poetry. It recalls a memorable and inspiring figure—prophet, poet, bard—as a reminder of the world of classic greatness which men too seldom inhabit in their daily reading; or it may be some choice gleaning from contemporary poetry. It is to emancipate from the second-rate, "best-seller" literature which claims everyday attention. It is to release us from the clutches of our commonplace selves; to remind

us of that aristocracy of the spirit that must be preserved against the dead set and the downward pull of mass conventionalism and averagism.

Such are the few instrumentalities designed to give tone to the mind, save that, as a light frame for the program, a brief prologue or opening word strikes a keynote, and a closing word serves as a sort of colophon to the morning's page. Bare! is the verdict of the chance visitor probably. Yes, deliberately bare, for the reasons already given; there being exceptions only on festival occasions, days when there are enrichments designed to reinterpret seasonal festivals like Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter so as to recall their original seasonal meanings and poetic significance.

The word "liberation" reëchoes in the heart; which is glad for a liberation from all the grotesque millinery and furniture and theatric pomp; and gladder still for liberation from the network of doctrines and dogmas that find their symbols in these shows.

III

The fellowship meets in a quiet place. The walls do not speak loud. They are a shell for silence and tempered speech and the tones of music. There is nothing there that says, "Look at me! I will fill the vacancy of your thoughts." No: the pleasant plainness says rather, "I favor the meditative mind, and I am a background of tranquillity for it." Here the shy voice of the soul, lost amid the noises of the world outside, may be heard and heeded. In this still atmosphere the folded self

may unfold to the light shed from communing minds, and to the warmth of intimacy. A choral silence reigns here. The speaker is set in a spaciousness fit for the voyaging mind. There is no cramped pulpit. Those low steps down to the common floor are for nearness and accessibility. Those rising tiers of seats suggest varying scales of age and experience, and there is unity and inclusiveness in the circling spread of them. And so the many are made one in visible presence.

In one of his rarest poems Wordsworth sings of "the breathing balm, the silence and the calm, of mute insensate things." Such a balm, such silence and calm, are breathed for sensitive minds in this simple home for the fellowship that inhabits it.

IV

The foregoing chapter has been written by one who grew up among the vaulted roofs and soaring spires and the beautiful parish churches of England. They still exercise their spell upon him, as they did upon one whom he was privileged to know, William Morris, of Kelmscott fame. Morris cherished them with a lover's ardor; but he no longer worshiped in them. It is fair to say that he lingered on the frontier; but we should hesitate to say in what state of mind, save that he was for fellowship. "Fellowship," says the priest in his masterpiece, *The Dream of John Ball;* "fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell." What can be said with certainty is that the love of those old sanctuaries, as of all beautiful things, coexisted in him with

a repudiation of the religion with which they were associated.

The view we press here is that our plea for plainness is no plea for less beauty in life or for discounting the power and ministry of beauty as an essential in right living. Beauty, as Morris held, is a sign of rightness and health, its very flowering in all kinds of work. What has been briefly debated is the place of beauty as an auxiliary in the functioning of religion, as we have tried to characterize it.[1]

[1] The writer has dealt more fully with the matter in an essay on "Religion and Beauty" contributed to the volume offered as a tribute to Dr. Felix Adler on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

BACKGROUND: ANGLO-AMERICAN

GRADUALLY and deviously I have tried to give the outlook and the "feel" of things on the religious frontier, and have reported what the new fellowship established there means. I might have been more directly autobiographical; for my own experiences on the way from the rear to the frontier, and then for many years as a sojourner there, are sufficiently typical, I believe, for the documentation of my story. At any rate, much that I have written I owe, not to book-knowledge, but to participation in group movements which date back to that momentous decade of the Eighties in England, when the ferment of modernism gave birth to those ideas and tendencies which have changed the whole temper and attitude of twentieth-century life. Those experiences will help me at this point to give a larger outlook upon the genesis of the ideas and forces that met in the Ethical Movement, if I tell something of the story of the impact of the movement in America on the group of men who responded to its appeal in England.

It was in those years of conflict in the Eighties, when evolution and Socialism and internationalism shook the old edifice of orthodox Christianity, insular nationalism, individualism and capitalistic absolutism, that there came from across the seas the message that led to

the formation of the first English Ethical Society. It emanated from a young Jewish leader in New York who had proposed a new basis for religious association. This basis, instead of antagonizing the conclusions and adventures of the modern mind, gave them hospitality and coöpted them so far as they were instrumental to the synthesis after which we—or some of us—were groping. Let me first give this English chapter of the story a little fuller setting. The factors were many, and they cannot be disjoined; indeed it is this complexity that makes it impossible to tell a straight and obviously sequential story.

The history of this decade of gestation being too long for extended recital, I select a few salient episodes relevant to my objective. Some of us had been prepared for the religious message from America by two specifically ethical influences: one was the ethical philosophy that was chiefly identified with the teaching and career of Thomas Hill Green, of Oxford; the other was the influence of Emerson, whose *Sovereignty of Ethics* was prophetic of the coming religion of ethics. These distinctively ethical influences related themselves to other general influences, especially to the expression of the new social vision and ardor voiced in Socialism. With this I should couple another American influence, the contagious spirit of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty,* and George's own appearance upon the scene; and I would add, as less portentous because more restricted, the appearance of another emissary from overseas, Henry D. Lloyd, whose *Wealth versus Common-*

wealth and *The New Conscience* furnished food for the new hungers. These were the days when "comrade" Morris, with his Arts and Crafts type of Socialism, and Arnold Toynbee and Toynbee Hall, the first social settlement; and the Salvation Army, echoing the Bitter Cry of Outcast London; and the University Extension crusade, were signs of a new era. There was much else, as, for example, the first litter of Fabians, with Shaw, Webb, Olivier and Wallas in the brood; but we must pass it all by.

We must, however, glance also at the forces that were undermining the old religious orthodoxy. There were left-wing churchmen like Stanley and Jowett; the scientific Humanists, Huxley and Tyndall and Clifford; and critics like Arnold, whose *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible* pointed the way to a new ethically oriented positivism, a word that recalls another minor influence, that of English Positivism, with its Comtean religion of humanity, championed zealously by Frederic Harrison; which made a strong appeal to some of us. I ought not to stop even there; but I must.

So I get back now, after this slight setting, to the record of the impact of the American Ethical Movement on an English group, for the sake of the light that it throws on the content and scope of the new religion that for a time promised to unite some of those whom one may perhaps venture to call frontier spirits in England. I well remember the circulation of the earliest literary output of the American movement; Felix Adler's addresses in *Creed and Deed* and in sundry

pamphlets, and a little book of addresses by the first apostolates, William M. Salter, S. Burns Weston, and Walter L. Sheldon, the founders of Ethical Societies in Chicago, Philadelphia and St. Louis, all of whom had been deeply influenced by Emerson. The men in England who responded to that message from America were mostly those who, as I have stated, had come under the powerful leadership of Green (the Mr. Grey of that agitating novel, *Robert Elsmere*). They included men whose names are now well known in the field of ethical thought, Muirhead, MacKenzie, Bosanquet, Bonar, Wallace. But they soon hesitated to follow the American lead in institutionalizing the movement by creating an organization on the American plan.

This *rapprochement* between the American movement and its offspring in England may be said to be due to the fact that two kindred factors operated in both countries. Those who have read Felix Adler's account of the two main influences that shaped his student thinking (in the opening chapters of his *magnum opus, An Ethical Philosophy of Life*) will recall his mention of Marx and Kant; and those two names stand for the contemporary awakening to the social question and to the new ethical teaching of Immanuel Kant. Here were the two main streams, in England as in America. The men who started the English Ethical Society were responding in their way, as Adler did in his, to the social appeal voiced by Socialism; and to the neo-Kantian ethics of Green's school. If we say, perhaps more

accurately, the neo-Hegelian ethics, it will remind us of a link of ethics with economics in Marx, whose intellectual ancestry was Hegelian, an interesting bit of history.

In these two factors, in this dual emphasis upon a new ethics and a new socialized conception of human nature and the social problem, we find the best clues to what is distinctive in the Ethical Movement and in Ethical Religion as it has been taking form in the Ethical Societies stationed on the American frontier of religious life.

The new ethics was responsible for the doctrine which is the corner stone of Ethical Religion; that is, the primacy and independence of what we will call the ethical intuition. It is this doctrine that makes possible a fellowship that can ignore differences of creed about matters of theology or the various theories of ethical sanctions. It changes the axis of the religious life from creed to conduct, and the character that determines conduct; or, to change the language, to personality and unconditional reverence for the autonomy of the individual life; the doctrine upon which the American polity is founded; the doctrine that is the heart of the Kantian ethics.

The social vision that found its formulation in socialism supplied that factor of social solicitude and endeavor which characterized the inception of the first Ethical Society. How to transform social life, politically, industrially, domestically, so that the human personality might not be violated or thwarted in its full

unfolding, was the problem to which the movement early addressed itself. The first activities of the parent society in New York were directed toward the practical solution of social and educational problems; and the equipment of their members to participate in movements for social and educational betterment has remained a steady purpose of the American Ethical Societies.

This story of English and American affinities does help, we think, toward a more solid understanding of the background of the movement; and, reverting to the refusal of the English group to go forward (following the American lead) to the formation of a religious organization, we may bring out another important point. The stumblingblock was—especially for Bosanquet, as I recall—the movement's insistence upon that assertion of the independence of the ethical intuition alluded to above. The objectors balked at the axiom of the sufficiency of ethics, referred to scornfully by the orthodox as "mere morality." There were those who, like Bosanquet, characterized it as an impossible divorce of ethics from metaphysics, following Green's insistence upon the necessary union of the two. This is a point the merits of which cannot be argued here.

There were other more general reasons for this refusal to set up what seemed like a church; and they shed light on the slow growth of the movement in this country as well as its failure to retain its hold in Germany, France, and elsewhere. In England there is an imponderable conservatism, curiously combined with

academic liberalism, which associates itself with the Established Church, and was and is still dominant in the two great English universities. The religion of the establishment is still so much a matter of "good form"! Even Arnold clung to it. Our American separation of Church and State has been a significant differentiating factor.

It should be added that the movement did go forward in England, both under the leadership of Stanton Coit, who was recruited from America (where he was associated with the New York Society) by the South Place Religious Society, which was renamed, after his call, The South Place Ethical Society; and also with the assistance of a group of men who at first included J. A. Hobson, Ramsay MacDonald, and Harry Snell (now Lord Snell), who is still President of the English Union of Ethical Societies. But the movement has taken on features of the institutional character it has had in America only in the case of the West London Ethical Church of which Dr. Coit is still the head, and which holds an honored place of its own.

And—we must go on to add—the mention of such early associates as MacDonald and Hobson leads us to another and more important explanation of the course of development in England. The principal reason why the Ethical Societies have not caught hold in England may be attributed to the fact that the Socialist Movement developed what was early called a religion of Socialism. Socialist meetings then had—and probably still have—a religious unction. The Cause—as Morris

called it and chanted it—caught up into itself the evangelical energy of church and chapel. It had its annex of Christian Socialism, which harked back to Kingsley. Yes, Socialism was a religion; and it had its "New Ethic" (as Belfort Bax styled it) and its apostolic expounders. It allied itself (and Bernard Shaw may be cited in this connection) with all sorts of tributary cultural movements and influences which gave it rich coloring and association; so that it took on the character of an inclusive philosophy of life.

And this Socialistic enthusiasm and solidarity did mean the preservation of what I have made pivotal in this discussion, namely, the spirit of fellowship, meaning fellowship in common devotion to a cause held to be supreme. Which brings me back into the main stream of the argument. For the contention to be pressed is that the fellowship at which ethical religion drives is broader than such a fellowship in Socialism. It is an all-inclusive fellowship in which all men of good will may find a place. It is therefore a fellowship which is larger than that which divides men into schools of thought and contending parties. Rather would it protect them against the sectarianisms to which all "causes" are prone. It establishes itself on the good will of the larger man in us that speaks with the voice of a tolerant and sympathetic humanity. This surely is the supreme human cause, based as it is on the common denominator of loyalty to those virtues without which men cannot live together harmoniously and with due respect for one another. Such a fellowship reposes

on the basis of Terence's *Homo sum;* the basis of diversity in unity; unity in the large-hearted neighborliness that leads those who are opponents "to be friends," and to agree to differ but to fraternize. Can the desirability of such a humanizing, inclusive, tolerant and generous fellowship be questioned?

After this attempt to make clear some of the more fundamental concepts upon which this new religion of the frontier relies to restore religious fellowship to the unchurched, we shall now face forward and shall try to indicate the more developed form which the ideas that govern the Ethical Movement of to-day have come to assume. And in this the writer must speak for himself, as the freedom granted to all the spokesmen of the movement allows him to do. They are subject to no canonical requirements and prohibitions. They dwell together in a unity of spirit that dictates its own wisdom of limitation and of difference.

PART III

NEW AND OLD: RENOVATION AND REINTERPRETATION

RENEWAL AND REINTERPRETATION

Life is the call to an adventure in education. As Valence has it, "I count life just a stuff to try the soul's strength on, and educe the Man,"—the archetypal man, potential in the flesh as a Hermes lay in the marble block for the vision of the Greek sculptor. Such is the self-prescribed task of a human mind furnished with a body for its tool and a world for its materials. It began as a grim adventure in self-preservation, and it has become an enterprise in self-development. No longer born in the wilderness, man now finds himself in a civilized world, with an accumulated heritage which he must be trained to understand and appropriate. He must be schooled to achieve his birth into civilization; his second birth. Nature achieved his first birth unto the flesh and endowed him with the dynamic of desire and passion, appetite and procreative urge. It is for society, man, to accomplish his second birth into the spirit, aiding the transmutation of these rude endowments of energy and impulse into the image of the archetypal man—desires into ideals, appetites into aspirations, wonder into science, fumblings into art, and sex into love.

Hence the word of education to man is the word of religion: "Thou must be born again!" The natural man must be reborn into the spiritual man: and he again

must be continually reborn, renewed, enter new lives, rise on the stepping-stones of his dead selves, as the condition of the life that is growth. Let him cease to grow, and he begins to die. Another birth is due.

The history of the race presents the analogue of these rebirths; it has been a drama of declines and falls and rearisings, of revolutions and renaissances; new beginnings in new worlds, from Egypt to Canaan, from Scythia to Hellas, from Hellas to Rome; and at length from the Old World of Europe to the New World of America. Old Testaments change to New. But in what different terms! And with what varied significance! The new birth that was the Renaissance was the transplanting of old growths in new soil. And so, in another manner, was the grafting of the scions of European civilization on the wilding stock of America. It is with this chapter of the story of education—new life in a new world, the Utopia of men's hopes—that we shall concern ourselves, in so far as it touches his religious fortunes.

II

Let us boldly say that we dare to see, in the religious new birth announced by the first Society for Ethical Culture a hundred years after the political new birth of this country, the late fruition of seeds germinated by the founders of a New England. We shall attempt to present it as such in a foreshortened historical perspective.

The first fact that arrests us in a large and rapid

survey is the stubborn persistence of religious tradition. Of all conservatizing forces religion is the most powerful. There was a New World, but there was no new religion. There is to-day no distinctively new religion, unless Christian Science be held to be such. However slight the baggage of the immigrant, it has almost always included his religious belongings. He might renounce his political allegiance, but waiting priests and pastors saw to it that he reaffirmed his religious loyalty. It was to that end that the first pilgrims took ship. And so it is that the Catholicism of the Middle Ages flourishes in our America: and that, as report has it, America is the Catholic hope of the world. Built upon a rock. That starts the imagination, which travels to Plymouth rock, and thence to near-by Boston. The Boston of Emerson's hope is become Catholicized Boston—transplanted Rome! How much that explains our strange predicament to-day—our cross-purposes, our politics, our conservatism—and what else! Religion is always for pouring old wine into new wineskins. That is why America's adventure has not been a religious adventure.

A foreshortened perspective, we said; and to be roughly and hastily sketched, because our limited purpose is to follow the recent national ancestry of this inconsiderably small group which has found a home on the frontier. A bare outline will serve our purpose.

Out of the small leaven of progressivism among the early migrants who sought "freedom to worship God" in their own way, and no other; out of men like Roger

Williams, there came at last a freer Congregationalism and Universalism, and then Unitarianism. And then a Channing and a Parker, and an Emerson: and after that? Well, an Octavius Frothingham in New York, who on his retirement extended a hand to the young man, Felix Adler, who had just arisen as the prophet of a new advance, announcing a creedless religion of deed—Ethical Culture.

It is upon the Emersonian ancestry that we concentrate attention. With Emerson a line of Protestant ministers ceased. He outgrew his inheritance; and he left the pulpit for the lecture platform, a sect for a public constituency, the Church for a nation-wide congregation of all sorts and conditions of men. His clear penetrating voice was heard across the seas, in England, France, Germany; and the new accent and cadence arrested attention. Here at last was the long delayed evangel out of that New World; distinctive, touched with genius, a new birth of the religious spirit; "the first native product of the American soil," and its first contribution to world-culture. "You are a new era, my man, in your new huge country!" so did Carlyle greet the author of the first manifesto of the new spirit; Carlyle, the Carlyle of that great scripture, *Sartor Resartus,* himself one of the progenitors of this new man. And that Emerson was really new—newer than Carlyle surmised—was demonstrated by the wide divergence of the paths these two men later trod. The manifesto was the little book, *Nature.* Its first words sound a new declaration of American independence:

Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we also have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? . . . Why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

And the small volume closes on the same rallying note:

Know then that the world exists for you. All that Adam had, all that Cæsar could, you can have and can do. . . . Line for line and point for point, your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names. Build therefore your own world.

How did the nation respond to this call? At least in his own New England it gave him opportunity to speak to youth, which he did with a much firmer voice in the addresses of 1837-1841, including the stirring and perturbing Divinity School address at Harvard, and the more deeply realistic address in Boston on "Man the Reformer." But America was to listen to another and louder call, the call to trade and commerce, interrupted, to be sure, by the call to arms; following which she returned to her material ambitions with redoubled ardor. She did obey the behest, Build your

own world; but it was a world of railroads and factories and skyscrapers, of telephones and oil-pipes and aëroplanes. It was not a renaissance of anything; it was an adventure; and it has had its romantic thrill and its idolatrous afflatus, the excitations of speed, size, power, ingenuity. As a quest of the golden fleece, it helped to sow the dragon's teeth; and armed men sprang up. It was again interrupted by another and a vaster war: and again was the getting and spending resumed; and a still more fabulous prosperity of material gain, unheard of in the world before, was the exceeding great reward. And then? The plight of to-day! Collapse; clamorous millions of unemployed; lawlessness and crime and gangdom; Chicago; corruption; Teapot Domes and Tammanies; politics financed and controlled by a Plutocracy; bought elections! And the "spiritual" estate? A flat complacency; an indifference that cannot be stirred save by a mean fear of the unfortunate idle; a lack of moral indignation and a confusion of moral values—gambling, indecency, silly indulgence—the mere naming of which evokes only the parrot cry of "Pessimist!"

Is it not time to listen to that smothered voice of Emerson? Is it not time for a religion that, in a very literal sense, means business? Are our ecclesiastics to be so many play-boys of the Western world? Shall they not drive at these needs? And to begin with, at something so elementary as common honesty in business and politics? Too simple! Religion? Why, that is the Bible and past history; and darkened

churches and ritual and showy music and pomp and ceremony!

Am I not voicing the reactions of the more earnest and disturbed souls whose feet seek the frontier? And shall there not be found there some who cannot and will not forget that the voice of an Emerson was once heard in the land? and that it was a voice free of the falsetto tones and flourishes of formalism?

III

Whither, more precisely, did these views of Emerson's earlier manhood lead him? The question is asked in no temper of discipleship that pinnacles Emerson as a sufficient monitor. There is no question as to his limitations; some were brought into relief by the florid Humanism of Whitman, with his rapturous "love of comrades." But in Whitman there was the same sense of the call of America to a new life responding to her vastness and her virgin soil, her commingled blood and the eclectic spirit of a nation of internationals. A new world of pioneers and the spirit of the modern; this dual flame of inspiration flared even with a gusty wildness in the soul of our unkempt poet of democracy. And in his prose, when he visions the "democratic vistas," there comes to the surface his apprehension lest America should fall short of the promise. Whitman has been a greater generative force among our younger writers and poets than Emerson; but Emerson, as Whitman testified, was the Socrates (let us say) of the full-born consciousness of an America come of age

and, as young America puts it, "on its own," to work out its new destiny in a great new world. It is in Emerson, therefore, that we find that first embodiment of the frontier spirit, which means two things: release from a religion fettered by Old World creedalism, and its identification with ethics. And in this Emerson saw the fruition of historic tendency, which as he believed and distinctly said, showed a progress or a *nisus* toward this identification. We need not follow the maturing of Emerson's thought and feeling, in his verse as in his prose, up to the point of clear emphasis in his *Sovereignty of Ethics*. We often recur to that passage in the essay on *Worship* in which he looks forward to the time when the new conviction and attitude shall be incorporate in assemblies of those who have become its votaries:

> There will be a new church founded on moral science; at first cold and naked, a babe in a manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the church of men to come, without shawms or psaltery or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters, science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry.

And then follow sobering words that indicate the characteristic note of Emersonian detachment, the lack of that warmth of fellowship which even he himself deplored, the human-heartedness that flooded his dissentient follower, Whitman. But we must beware lest we overstate. In *The Sovereignty of Ethics* the same thought shapes itself thus:

It accuses us that . . . pure ethics is not now formulated and concreted in a *cultus,* a fraternity with assemblings and holy days, with song and book, with brick and stone. Why have not those who believe in it and love it, left all for this, and dedicated themselves to write out its scientific scriptures to become its Vulgate for millions?

And the passage continues in a more social vein, Emerson recognizing that "there is now a new feeling of humanity infused into public action." And presently he makes the confident prediction, "America shall introduce a pure religion." And we ask, Has the hour struck? Have a few heard the clock strike? It is the question that is being passed round on the frontier.

IV

We need not follow further this Emersonian lead. Here was a new interpretation of the meaning of America, its meaning for civilization and religion. It seemed to portend that America was coming of age spiritually; but the portent was premature. Its political rebirth, the meaning of it as a new political adventure, had been announced. It had declared its political independence of the Old World; and that had included man's release from religious dictation, and to that extent his religious freedom. It recognized his independence as a man on the basis of his human worth. He was a person; and was required to recognize his fellows as persons and equals. But that further voluntary independence of the mind; its release from a religion that was monarchical in its adaptations, and its

rebirth into a religion for a republic and a democracy, it did not feel called upon to assert.

And this takes us back again to our frontier problem. For we must recognize this, surely, as another illustration of the failure of religion to address itself to needs. Is not one of the discrepancies of which the modern mind is becoming aware the discrepancy between a religion that in its concepts and its terminology, its ideology, as the expression runs to-day, remains monarchical and a democratic and republican order of life?

> God said, I am tired of kings;
> I suffer them no more.

A religion without kings and kingly authority, without the symbols and the language of kingship—what would that mean? Reinterpretation is our answer.

Renovation, America undoubtedly meant; an exodus into a Promised Land; a Pisgah sight of it; a summons to build afresh; an exhilarating new start. But reinterpretation? There has been no time or inclination for that in the haste of feverish activity. That has had to wait; and the building has gone forward on the old plan. The churches have been reproductions of the Old-World edifices for Old-World monarchical worship, its kingly prostrations and obeisances. "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!" it still shouts.

So the summons is to reconsideration and reinterpretation. That work of reinterpretation will exact a reëxamination of all the old suppositions in the light of actual needs, many of them now loud-crying imperious

needs. What they are we may be helped to understand by the discontents and abandonments of the secessionists of the frontier, which we have here tried to characterize.

THE NEW AND THE OLD

And the Demand for Reinterpretation

Through the foregoing chapter runs the refrain of the word "new"; and that emphasis may accuse us of blindness to the part which the old must always play in the religion of men; the old eternal and primal facts of our human drama, birth and death, and labor and sorrow, and all the great recurrences that are the warp upon which we weave the patterns of life. Underlying all the mutations of time, like deep waters below the surface waves of change, are these constants of our lot; and a crucial test of the ministry of religion must be its dealings with these abiding basic realities.

The new spirit gives a new meaning to the past, a larger and deeper one. It makes a place for this primal piety in a fellowship with humanity whereby we may live in an enfolding consciousness of the life of man. We are to be continually reminded of the abiding legacy of that past; its conquests and heroisms; its great pioneers, whose beacon fires burn on the summits of time; its great gifts of beauty, its artistry, its music; its great scriptures and poems whose wisdom is of no time and place and grows not old.

And, further, the new spirit demands that we shall do so free of that jealous spirit of exclusivism with

which Christendom has pressed its claims, of which its very dating of time—of Before and After—and its one and only Redemption, are irritating reminders. Historic time has expanded. The past, thanks to the persistent efforts of the archæologists to recapture it, is more and more with us. It is more and more difficult to keep up with the past. Egypt has been spread upon its canvas, and Crete and Samaria. We are acquiring a new imaginative possession of the past, which Carlyle opened to some of us in his *Past and Present,* the same Carlyle who preached the gospel of the Eternal Now, which for him was the meeting point of the two Eternities of Past and Future. Which suggests at once that the "new" thing in the modern consciousness is this very relationship between the old and the new, the past and the present. So that we are really brought back again to that idea of totality upon which we have laid so much stress.

We shall try to do justice to this fundamental aspect of religion. But our method will be concrete. We shall try to show how a religion based on ethics faces this issue of the relation of the new and the old after the manner in which all new religions have tried to do so—by the method of reinterpretation. The old is not ignored; it is retranslated. This was the method by which Christianity endeavored to transform the views and usages of the pagan world, its folk-ways, its rites, its festivals, so that these might carry the meanings and doctrines of the invading institution of the Church. As these changes—and they were changes that gave new

depth and significance to life—were registered most conspicuously and most influentially in the major celebrations of the old folk life; in the seasonal festivals centered in man's solicitude for fertility, upon which his food depended, his very life—we shall make these festivals the main topic in our treatment. They covered a very wide area of belief about life and death and human destiny.

II

We start with a further application of the idea of totality. That major premise forbids us to isolate any one of the three aspects of time as past, present, and future (Bergson's theory of duration might serve us here; but we must not allow ourselves any excursions of this sort). "No clock strikes the hours in the horolog of history," says Carlyle. That is a part truth, due to an overemphasis of the doctrine of the Eternal Now. History surely does recognize that a dated hour was struck by the timepiece of events when a company of adventurers landed on the shores of a newly discovered continent to begin a new life in a new world. Only, it was not—when we come to a strict analysis—it was not in essentials a new world; and the life the Pilgrims began to live in it was not in essentials a new life; indeed they wanted the old life under more favorable conditions; they sought freedom to live it religiously as they were prevented from doing in the Old World. The face of the New World had the old familiar features, hills and dales, forests and clearings,

streams and waters. There were the same dawns and settings, and the starry dome overhead. And the new life was the old life of labor; plowing and seeding and harvesting; craftsmanship and spinning and all the accustomed domestic tasks. The new was insofar the old, changed by the altered resources of a strange environment.

And that is the story of life for all of us and for all times. The new is born out of the old and carries the future in its bosom. There are no brand-new beginnings; there are transformations and reinterpretations. Revolutions are accelerated evolutions. We are reminded of that chapter of Dante's life which he heads, "*Incipit Vita Nova,*" "Here beginneth the new life." While it comes as near as may be to the truth, heralding the coming of a new being and a transforming new love into his life, it is an impossible legend over any chapter of human history. The stream of human life flows continuously, though it may run underground for a space. The "new man" of a new era must continue to use the speech and idiom of the old, and he cannot wipe the slate of memory clean of associations and tastes and attachments. The old life-patterns and thought-patterns are woven into the fabric of the common experience, the periodicities of sun and moon, days and months and years. And their names abide, and the stories they tell.

But changes come. They came at once in that new life in a new world; and notably in the religious celebration of the festivals that still marked the calendar

and punctuated the seasonal drama. So we return to that point, and we use it to give concreteness to our treatment. In the first place the old Harvest Home festival took on a new form in that first Thanksgiving, and resulted in the institution of the distinctively American festival of Thanksgiving. In the next place the liberated Puritanism of the newcomers led to the banning of the Old-World midwinter festival of Christmas and the Spring festival of May Day. The Christmas tree, the holly and the ivy were (rightly) identified as pagan, and so was the Maypole, with the garlands, the dances, and the carols. And Easter, named still in honor of a pagan goddess of the Spring! took on a sobriety that was characteristically Puritan.

So far there was in fact a new life, due in this particular relation to rejections. These changes struck a negative note. They could not last. The course of history led in time to a Renaissance of the old joy, deep-rooted in the race; and Christmas and May Day returned. These festivals recovered their old popularity. The late date of Thanksgiving had helped to put Christmas in eclipse. Now Christmas again exerts its old sway; and it too has undergone a kind of Americanization, in that it is observed almost universally in a large secular way, so that the scruples even of our Jewish citizens have been largely overcome, and they join in the general jubilation. In such wise do we revert in this New World to the ways of the Old World, at any rate in this sphere of human interest; and it is a sphere that has been occupied by religion; and it may continue

to be occupied if the new religion will furnish the reinterpretations that are called for by changes in the religious convictions of men. Puritanism could not hold its own. The pendulum swung back. In turn it tends to swing too far. Christmas gets divorced from its poetic meanings; becomes cheap and trivial. It must regain its poetic import.

III

In spite of the desire to conduct a well-ordered and clearly articulated discussion, we have again been forced into that connotative treatment which blurs the outline of sequence, but is hardly avoidable in dealing with so intricate a matter as religion. Let us try to vertebrate this corpus of argument. Our initial stress upon fellowship would naturally lead us to consider those most choral fellowshippings when men are united for the celebration of the great seasonal turning points of the calendar, Springtime and Harvest, Summer and Winter, Ingathering and Outgoing. The modern removal from Nature in our urbanized and artificialized cities supplies new reasons for the recall to the elemental agricultural background of human life. These festivals are as old as man's anxiety as to wherewithal he shall be fed, and as his study of the forces that govern the ebb and flow of Nature. They were, as Carpenter insists in his *Pagan and Christian Creeds,* grounded in vegetational and astronomical phenomena; and these phenomena receive certain common treatments. The parallelisms are obvious. They early became a parable

of the life of man. "There are four seasons in the life of man." Life and death, and again new life—here was a mystery. Religion made these ideas nodal points in its ritual; and it cannot cease to concern itself with these life-patterns. An Ethical Religion will in its turn face the challenge to reinterpret them in harmony with its spirit and its purposes.

And the leading clues may easily be seized. The festivals are evocative of certain dominant moods: hope begotten of the reborn life and beauty of Spring, after the Winter of dearth; appreciation, out of the full-flowered beauty of Summer; gratitude, out of the fruition of the Fall; joy, the indoor flame of man's unconquerable heart of generosity and sociability, out of midwinter, coupled with rejoicing over the returning light of the Unconquered Sun (typified in Christianity by the prophecy of life in the new-born babe, the Son of Light); and then again the ascent of life in the crescent days and shortening nights that bring in another Spring. We have here a cycle of the pieties; every year the old made new; every year the alternating choral chanting of the joy that is "in widest commonalty spread." The old pattern—solstice and equinox, heat and cold, plenty and dearth, abides; but the meanings change.

To take this discussion out of the field of generalities, we shall put in evidence an attempt made at reinterpretation in consonance with the religion which we offer to the detached wayfarers of the frontier. We choose the festival of Thanksgiving, to which we shall

devote our next chapter, to indicate how the body of ideas involved in our frontier religion of ethics may be clothed with the vesture of concrete illustration. But first we will try to carry to a more conclusive outcome the issue raised at the outset as to the relation of the old to the new, or rather as to the sense in which we use the term "new."

IV

The sum of the matter is this: the adjustment we started to make between old and new turns out to be readjustment. The old primal facts of our human lot are always with us, but the setting of them is continually changing. New knowledge and circumstance make old interpretations impossible. And yet men cling to them, discredited though they be. The emotions, the heart and imagination, refuse to budge. And religion has been the stronghold and support of this immutability; and has yielded to change only under the last compulsion of obviousness. Thus religion has trailed increasing baggage-loads of sentimentally treasured relics. Then from time to time vital, athletic spirits have felt the incubus of these accumulations, have cast them off, and rejoiced in new freedom. The time is come when we must again shed the trailing traditions and obsolete interpretations of the past.

As Emerson saw it, that change from the Old World to the New was an opportunity and a challenge to begin afresh, to cast off the old clothes and be rid of the old baggage. The newcomer did not see it so. Two cen-

turies elapsed before the vision came to him. He then proclaimed the call to a new life animated by a new spirit. It followed the nation's brave response to the call to a new political freedom and being; a call to independence and the creation of a republic. But that turned out to be the signal for a new career, not of the inner soul of man, but for the material enterprise of developing a continent. The new executive spirit that was born of it achieved wonders of exploitation and achievement. It had its reward, at the cost, as it now looks, of something like spiritual bankruptcy; and that insolvency now becomes manifest in an industrial breakdown that attests a lack of social vision, ethical vision, false first principles, a shallow reading of life; and behind it a religion that has little or nothing to say about it. Its life—palpably its political life—is tainted with dishonor. Dives is in control.

So that, after all, the question is, What new spirit can be infused into this old life of material adventure and material gain to transform it into rightness? Righteousness? And our answer has been, A new spirit, embodied in a transformed religion, which shall drive straight at the essentials of right conduct—business conduct, political conduct—and will cease to dissipate itself on disputings and creedal cares, on formalism and display, on anxieties as to life elsewhere, in heaven or hell. This new spirit will react on the eternal verities that have been won out of the hard living of our race, its highest ethical wisdom, its insight into truth and

justice by reinterpreting them in terms of the actual needs of those who must meet life in the conditions under which men must live to-day. The old must be made new.

A REINTERPRETATION: THANKSGIVING

THE festival of Thanksgiving occupies a special place among the festivals observed in this country. It is an uniquely American festival: no other country has its exact equivalent. The practice of issuing a national proclamation, in which the head of our government calls upon the people to set aside a day to express their thankfulness for the blessings they enjoy, is unique. The explanation lies in the nation's history. The occasion owes its origin to what we may call a baptismal event of America's great adventure—the first Ingathering of the surviving band of Pilgrims after a perilous year in their new home on the rock-bound shore of a new world. It is a great memory, worthy to be kept alive. But to attempt to do so in the terms of that old Puritan faith and outlook is to be guilty of an anachronism. The typical Presidential Proclamation is not large enough to include the varied elements of the Republic. It fails to touch all those whose religion speaks another language than that in which the fathers and founders spoke three hundred years ago. It may be the language of the majority; but it is outdated for a considerable minority.

We shall assume a general readiness on the part of our citizenry to commemorate that heroic initial chapter of America's story. We shall assume also a readiness

to rubricate a day of the calendar on which the spirit of gratitude for the gifts of life is to find expression. It is good to keep that mood of appreciation alive. It quickens one of the finest qualities of human nature. But may it not be done without an antiquarian revival of views that no longer commend themselves to large numbers of our citizens? The festival calls for a reinterpretation; and we shall here suggest one that seems to us to accord with the religious attitude we have been commending.

II

That first Ingathering continued the custom—a very ancient custom—of the Harvest festival, or Harvest Home, kept in the mother country. It celebrated the ancient joy over the bounty of Nature, as the fruits of the earth that were to serve through the long Winter were taken to be stored in granary and cellar. It awakened that seasonal piety and that poetic appreciation of the beauty of Nature which had prompted the Greek in his praise of Demeter, the Great Mother, for her fruitfulness. The spirit of beauty had always presided over the celebration; the deep rich color, the fragrance of the ripened woods and fields and pastures, all the "mellow fruitfulness" of Autumn.

We do not do them wrong if we say that the voice of this more pagan joy in beauty was muted in those austere Puritan souls. And on this occasion their thankfulness took a wider scope, as is suggested by its new name. That first festival closed for them a year of

great anxiety and many perils; and they were moved to render thanks, not only for the bounty of Nature, such as it was in that first hard year of their life; but for all God's dealings with them and their cause. In the words of the Book of Common Prayer, they gave thanks for their "creation, preservation and *all* the blessings of this life."

It is this larger significance of the festival, as covering all the blessings of this life which concerns us. And it is good, we have said, to have a yearly festival devoted to the celebration of this virtue. Gratitude is a form of joy, and a high form of joy. It has the therapeutic value of all wholesome joy, akin to that which Aristotle attributed to the quickening of the emotions of pity and fear by tragedy. Its office is to liberate, purify and intensify the sentiment of thankfulness, so that it may irrigate the dry soil of our lives to new fruitfulness.

This office is especially important for the people of this favored nation, because the sort of lyric gratitude which this festival is intended to evoke has tended to decline among us, and especially among those of us who have broken away from the old religious moorings. It has declined among us as a nation chiefly because we have been so prosperous, so sated with this world's goods. This is most apparent where it is most serious, among the young, and notably among the children of the comfortable classes. To find it fully alive, we must go among the children of the poor with their keen delight in simple things, and in every simple addition to

the resources of pleasure. It is a truism that the crude rag doll of the poor child evokes a livelier appreciation and gratitude than does the splendid Parisian automaton of the rich child. Gratitude with difficulty survives superfluity. We are prone to appraise our gifts too grossly for their material values, and not enough as symbols of affection and regard. Hence our growing practice of making costly gifts in order to force the sentiment into liveliness; and, what is worse, of refraining from making gifts unless we can make expensive ones. The complaint is increasingly voiced at Christmas, when the burden of taxation is heaviest.

Can anything be more exasperating than the ungrateful, unappreciative child who takes with a greedy silence every gift that is thrown into its lap? It knows no surprise but surprise at the smallness of the gift. Happily we most of us still resent this unresponsiveness, because we really delight in gratitude as it flows freely forth from the glad heart.

III

But, to come to the second point, the impulse of thanksgiving has been especially chilled in those of us who have had to reject the orthodox religion of our fathers and would avoid the phraseology and the ritual which it utilized. This repugnance is unfortunate in its results, and should spur us to find new means of calling the capacity for gratitude into activity, in ourselves if possible, but in any case in our children.

When in this connection I recall, as doubtless my

reader can, the pious customs of my childhood, I realize that among the most important were certain established habits of expressing gratitude. Before the Sunday meal began, at which the large family was united, a few moments were devoted to an expression of thankfulness. Simply said, "For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful," the words served a precious purpose. Again, at the close of the meal came the recital, or more often the singing, of a stanza beginning, "We thank thee, Lord, for this our food." Modernists, objecting to the words, have abandoned the practice, and the ethical opportunity is missed.

What was precious here was the attitude involved. Early education is mainly a matter of cultivating emotional attitudes. The child may do its corrective thinking later: it can seldom feed a starved emotion back into life. Not at all surprising to me are the cases (and I know of several) in which parents, failing to find the requisite emotional nurture in liberal organizations, have sent their children to orthodox churches and Sunday schools, in one striking case to the Catholic Church, the doctrines of which were abhorrent to the parent, but were tolerated for the sake of the emotional nurture.

Now, in this matter of observances, as means of evoking emotional responses which otherwise would not occur, the Catholic Church is wise. If we do not of forethought draw upon the fountains of emotion by deliberately planning to call them forth, they will

dry up. Some forms are indispensable; and we should regard our great national holidays—this Thanksgiving holiday—as so many forms of ceremonial observance calling for certain kinds of emotional responsiveness.

Not to leave this point without a definite word of counsel, let me urge that every parent should see to it that the child who receives a kindness or a gift develops the habit of expressing its gratitude by saying, "I thank you," just as it should express its courtesy by the conventional salutation on the street, or at the beginning and close of a letter. The habit, quietly and simply encouraged, will beget and sustain the feeling. We proceed in education from habit and impulse to feeling and reason. Wise parents will exact thanks to themselves for services rendered, and stimulate a similar gratitude toward others. So they may help to build up, not only this emotion of gratitude, but all the other basic emotions with which the child ought to be equipped before it reaches the age of reason. Ordinarily our education of the young is far too rationalistic. We should remember that reason is but the rudder of our nature, and that our fundamental need is the propelling power of the emotions without which the rudder is futile.

IV

But now to come to the root of those aversions which deter us from falling into line with Presidential Thanksgiving proclamations. In a word, the trouble is that we cannot be anthropomorphic in our way of thinking

about the mysterious and unscrutable Power that is at work in Nature, and by which the fruits of the earth are produced in due season. The God of Nature, "the author and giver of the good things," which this festival praises, was for many minds dethroned when the evolution hypothesis gained credence. After Darwin, Nature could no longer be regarded as the beneficent power which the eighteenth century had conceived it to be; she revealed a battleground, a slaughter heap, on which the unfortunate and unfit had perished. She was a Nature which, to use the old phraseology, blest with her sun not only the just but the unjust, and blest as blindly as she smote. In short, Nature seemed to ignore moral values and human deserts altogether. How could men thank her or her author?

This left a rather frigid world to live in: a depersonalized world of mere law and order. Such a world could evoke none of our deeper emotions. Love can be evoked only by things really lovable; the word is applicable only to humanized beings. We may "like" a place or an animal; but "love" asks love in response. A law-pervaded cosmos may move the mind to awe, but leaves the heart untouched. Who can love a cosmos? As well suggest that one should express gratitude to a mountain or to the sea for the vision of beauty with which it blesses our eyes, or to the fruitful valley or the dense forest for the benefits which it dispenses to man!

Nevertheless, the sentiment of thankfulness presses for an outlet. We long to utter our pent-up emotions of thankful admiration for the marvelous beauty and won-

der of Nature; and so we join with Wordsworth when he exclaims:

> . . . Great God! I'd rather be
> A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
> So might I standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Aye, we impetuously declare: "Better a paganism with joy at its heart and praise on its lips than an arid rationalism which has drained off its life-giving emotions"—were that indeed the alternative, which happily is not the case. According to Ruskin, all art is a response of thankfulness in the presence of Nature and life: "All art is praise"; it is begotten of admiration of the glory and mystery of the world. Out of such an attitude proceeds Whitman's outburst in his hymn on the death of Lincoln:

> Praised be the fathomless Universe!

We may seek a rational justification of this recognition of a universal providence in the fact that ultimately all things are what they are because the universe, the cosmic order, is what it is. In it we live and move and have our being. We are its offspring; on it we depend; our life is part of its life; our pulse beats part of its rhythm. Further, we do not make ourselves and our own faculties. We are "creatures of large discourse looking before and after," with capacities of joy and

sorrow, of reason and love, by no effort of ours. Likewise, the bounties of Nature by which we live we owe ultimately to the mysterious and inexhaustible power of life. All the fertility of this vast continent man *finds* awaiting his conquest and use; more than that, the power of mind by which he conquers them, he also *finds*. It is therefore rational that we should feel some awed appreciation of this cosmic power at work in things and the cosmic life and energy in which we share.

Nevertheless, this is but one-half of the truth, or less; it is by virtue of the other moiety, which is commonly lost sight of and unexpressed, that our sentiment of gratitude for the blessings of life must be transformed and transfigured. For it is a fact that Nature is no longer merely Nature. She has been made over by man. Axe and spade, plow and hoe, directed by man's intelligence and wielded by his brave enterprise and patient labor, have put the mark of his inventive and creative mind upon it. Through his prowess, and not by the grace or power of a divinity outside him, have the wilderness and the solitary place been made to blossom as the rose.

Hence the original cosmic providence, by which the cosmos *is,* has been supplemented by a more significant human providence; more significant, because it is more impressively the expression of man's creative mind and emotion and imagination. Thus those poems in stone, the great cathedrals and temples, are more significant, evoke richer and deeper emotions, than the cliffs and

quarries from which man has hewn the stone and marble. The music of human song and speech and symphony is more significant than the song of bird or brook, torrent or storm wind.

Thus there emerges that new conception of Thanksgiving for which I wish to plead; an outpouring of the heart toward this secondary but closer and more appealing providence of man. It is a providence which has not only increased the fruitfulness of the earth and supplied our material necessities, but has been productive of other benefits which have been gained by man's patient and heroic effort in pursuit of knowledge and truth, justice and kindness.

V

This is my text. Our Thanksgiving should be *primarily* an outflow of gratitude to man. But it must be distinctly understood that this does not commit us to ignoring or canceling the ulterior cosmic providence by this secondary human providence. The new conception visions man conspiring with Nature, obeying her laws, and carrying forward her creative purpose, but outdistancing her as the cathedral outdistances the cave, and adding a new and more expressive superstructure to her foundation. And this creative work of transforming Nature and making his own world he has done at an awful cost in struggle and labor, in blood and tears, in defeats and martyrdoms; and the great tragic drama of his slow conquest of himself and Nature by discovery and invention, by laws and institutions

is profoundly affecting when we follow its slow unfolding.

The almost universal tendency in Christendom is to ignore this human providence by returning thanks to God for *"all* the blessings of this life." But this position, if pressed, means a denial of man's responsibility and freedom. If morality means anything at all, it means the responsibility of man for his acts. It ceases to be morality directly we attribute these acts, not to man himself, but to God. Our human life, our system of law, our habit of attributing praise and blame to man, is based upon an assumption of human merit and demerit. Unfortunately we overlook this primary human responsibility and this human merit when we ascribe all the results of human actions and all human worth, not to man, but to God. If any defense of this position is made, it is reasoned that although man may be meritorious, he is so because God made him as he is, and that therefore to God must our thanks be rendered. We do not, however, apply this reason to the criminal, and excuse him because he is as God made him. No worthy man would shelter himself behind any such plea. Rather will he exclaim, out of the very jaws of destruction:

> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul.

This would be a foolishly proud boast; but the poet who wrote those admired lines wrote in hyperbole and, if you please, in heroics, what high-hearted men actually applaud.

Let me make all this concrete. When a victorious army returns from battle, Christendom has been in the habit of chanting its *Te Deum,* just as if all the tragic heroism of the battlefield had to be ascribed to God. To God be all the praise! The great psalm does not recognize man. True, we sometimes raise monuments to the great captains and heroes; but it has been as a secondary consideration: our first and our conventional reaction is one of gratitude *to God,* eclipsing gratitude to man. If the victories are God's, of course the defeats are his also; which means—to take a concrete example—that when the Christian Russians were defeated by the heathen Japanese they should have chanted their *Te Deum* to celebrate their defeat, thanking God for their humiliation and for chastening them.

There is an impiety about this forgetfulness of man which is deplorable and shocking. Man is in eclipse under the shadow of God, because both man and God are misconceived. Let me try to fortify my views by some humbler illustrations.

Let us contemplate such a scene as this: A small family of five is gathered in a little dwelling round the Sunday table for dinner, the great event of the week, the only meal which the family takes together, in fact, a veritable family sacrament. Before the meal begins, all heads are bent and the father gravely asks the blessing, "We thank Thee, Lord, for this our food." All human reference is omitted. The doors of human gratitude are shut tight. No young heart is taught to throb in thankfulness toward the hard-working father who

has labored the week through to procure this meal, or to the unwearying mother who day and night has lost all thought of self in ministering to her household. Would these little hearts praise God less if first of all they thanked and praised father and mother? Would they be better or worse for a recognition of the close-embracing human providence which had been at work to serve them?

Another scene: Dripping and panting stands a man in a street crowd made visible in the lurid glare of a great fire. He has been perilously snatched by a brave fireman out of the engulfing flames. His heart swells with thankfulness for his escape; so he lifts his hands to heaven and thanks God for a miraculous rescue. "Look," says the offended Spirit of Man, "look not above, but beside you. There is thy providence, that dauntless hero and servant of the endangered. Thy thanks shall reëcho back from the vault of heaven until he is thanked. Better forget thy God than forget him."

Yet another familiar scene in the heart of a great city. A group of children play on the sidewalk which is their only playground. In the excitement of the game one of them runs with heedless mirth into the middle of the street right into the head of an electric street-car. The motorman does his best, but the wheels grate over the mangled body before he can stop. The poor little bleeding victim is picked up and carried into a drug store to await help. The destroying forces of life —"accident," we say, "the act of God," says a conventional phrase—have made havoc with one more young

life. But, behold! the repairing forces of a human providence are set swiftly to work. There is no inquiry as to the merits of the case, no calculation as to whether the drooping life of that lowly child is worth saving. Within a few minutes an ambulance arrives upon the scene, all traffic giving way to this prompt messenger of healing. Gently the little broken and bleeding body is placed in it and taken swiftly to the hospital near-by. In a little while the stripped form lies in the hospital operating-room, and a skilled surgeon, learned with the hard-earned medical learning of the ages, backed by all the surgical resources of human invention, is doing the best that man can do for man. Gently he cuts and binds, washes and anoints, a band of trained helpers assisting. When, an hour or two later, the unconscious little soul awakes out of its alleviating sleep to a puzzled consciousness of its condition, it is in an immaculate cot in a small aisle of quiet there in the midst of the city's roar. The best of human skill, taught by long centuries of experiment and effort, nurses the body into health. By-and-by the smiling, dislimbed child leaves the hospital, to assume its life in the family; and on the first Sunday its members go to church, and the thanks to God are rendered. That child-heart, knowing not that it has been the recipient of the blessings of man's accumulated toil and thought, owns no gratitude to humankind, is taught to feel at that moment no thrill of overmastering thankfulness to his human benefactors; assumes no vows to repay his vast human debt. The prayer ascends to heaven: "We thank

Thee for our creation, preservation and *all* the blessings of this life."

VI

Is it not passing strange that a grateful recognition of this human providence should be so rare? Strange that there should so seldom flow forth from our hearts a gratitude to that human power which we ought to thank in the first instance for all that is included under the term civilization; those blessings of safety and peace, of justice and equity which we owe, not to any divine intervention and help, but to the steady, dogged persistence and valor and heroism of our race, our brother man! Strange that no such note should sound in our Thanksgiving proclamations! Do we forget that it is man who has conquered not alone the wild beast in the jungle but also the brute in himself, who has stayed the flood and the tornado, the plague and the pestilence, whose invention and labor have achieved the wonders which make our modern life so much more livable and resourceful than was that of our ancestors?

Occasionally some sense of our human achievement and indebtedness does break forth. Let us recall for a moment—ancient as it is—the splendid apostrophe of the chorus in the *Antigone* of Sophocles:

> Many wonders there are, yet none is more wondrous than man.
> 'Tis he that o'er the hoary sea, before the winter's storm-wind makes his way, passing amid engulfing billows.
> And that eldest of the gods, the immortal, unwearied

Earth, he wears away, as his plow moves up and down, and his mules stir the clod.

He masters by his arts the beasts that roam through the upland wilds, and he brings under the encircling yoke the horse with the shaggy mane, and the tireless mountain bull.

And speech and wind-swift thought and the moods that inspire social life, he hath learned; and how to avoid the shafts of cheerless frosts beneath the open sky and the arrows of the driving rain—all-resourceful.

Without resource he faces nought that is to be.

Ingenious beyond all thought is his inventive skill, as he turns now to evil, now to good.

We may take a hint from this outburst: we are to include in our conception of our human providence not only the few great men who are held in renown for the more splendid conquests of our humanity, but also the vast multitude of the unknown helpers and servants in all lands and through all ages: the hosts of the suffering, unwearied mothers of men; the slaves and serfs harnessed to the merciless Juggernaut of the oppressor; the unremembered artists and craftsmen who have adorned life with beauty; the singers, sages, inventors and discoverers, as well as all the forgotten folk who have added their unremembered increments of value to our rich human inheritance.

There is no exaggeration or sentimentality in this view. Let me draw support for it from one of the most learned and most sober historians of early man:

We stand upon the foundation reared by the generations that have gone before, and we can but dimly realize the painful and prolonged efforts which it has cost humanity to struggle up to the point, no very exalted one, after all,

which we have reached. Our gratitude is due to the nameless and forgotten toilers whose patient thought and active exertions have largely made us what we are. There is indeed little danger at present of undervaluing the contribution which modern times and even classical antiquity have made to the general advancement of our race. But when we pass these limits, the case is different. Contempt and ridicule are too often the only recognition vouchsafed to the savage and his ways. Yet of the benefactors whom we are bound thankfully to commemorate, many—perhaps most—were savages. We are like heirs to a fortune which has been handed down for so many ages that the memory of those who built it up is lost.

So writes Professor Frazer whose scholarship has given to us that fascinating and illuminating record of primitive history and belief, *The Golden Bough*.[1]

VII

In process of time the realization of our indebtedness to humanity will assuredly produce a new form of religious consciousness and religious spirit; but that time is probably far off. Too much of the old conception of man as a miserable and undeserving sinner still lingers. Yet it is from this human race of "miserable sinners" that we all inherited the fruits of human toil and endurance, the fruits of the human sweat and blood, the strife and struggle, the sacrifices and martyrdoms which, with due respect to the feelings of our orthodox friends, we may call the Cross and Passion of

[1] Vol. I, p. 211.

Humanity as it trod along the Via Dolorosa of man's pilgrimage.

Let me revert again to the danger of misunderstanding here. Let me repeat that this is not a plea for a human *as against* or as opposed to a cosmic providence. What I am concerned to emphasize is that there is no true and pious conception of a Providence which slights the Providence of man; that there can be no true Divinity which is not grounded in a true humanity. We do not honor God by dishonoring man. Until the fire of human love has burned on the altars of the heart, no acceptable incense of divine love can kindle and mount to heaven.

In other connections I have alluded to the revolutionizing change that had come over our ways of religious thinking during the last one hundred and fifty years: the change to or toward Pantheism which replaced the transcendent supernatural God of the past by an immanent one. This change helped us to seek the supreme revelation of the power at work in the world, in human reason and love, and not in a Nature external to man. The logical conclusion to be drawn, for our present purpose, from this change in our way of thinking about the Power "behind the veil," is that man himself, as the seat of reason and love, is at once human and superhuman, or supernatural. Man, in the light of this idea of immanence, is the expression at once of a divine principle of reason, affection and will (no mere blind life-force, the characterless nondescript Vitalism

of some modernists), and of natural and corporal impulses (inseparable from it) of appetite and passion. Strange mixture is he of "dust and deity," of animal and angel, of saint and satyr! The last word about him must be paradoxical:

> Unless above himself he can erect himself,
> How vain a thing is man.

Himself; yet capable of transcending himself. Such is man; a part of Nature by his body, and yet as the master of his body and of the rude unfinished stuff of Nature, more than that.

It follows from this view of man that the service of humanity is at the same time the service of that something in man whereby he can erect himself above himself to the height of some superself, some ideal, some Highest—however we may rationalize it. Or we may render it otherwise by saying that the true service of this Highest, this ideal, is primarily the service of man. This view seems to be involved in some of the teachings of Jesus; as, for example, when he questions: "Whoso loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" and when he declares of human service that "Inasmuch as ye have done such service unto men, even to the least of my little ones, ye have done it unto Me."

Unfortunately, this human approach has not always been open. It was continually being closed. When the rich young lawyer asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, he was led to give, with the Master's

approval, his own answer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy soul and with *all* thy strength and with *all* thy might; and thy neighbor as thyself." The Lord God is to be loved with *all* the heart and strength: and the neighbor comes off a poor second-best—nay, there is no heart and strength left for him.

VIII

The position which I have been taking would go so far as to reverse this one. It would proceed from the known and the near to the unknown and the distant; from the brother whom we have seen to the God whom we have not seen—and for whom some still look in vain because they do not seek him in man. It virtually says that if God is to be conceived as reason and love, he is to be so conceived by virtue of what we know of reason and love in man—the only palpable knowledge we can have. The gateway is Man.

I began by saying that with us who have rejected the religion of our fathers, the sentiment of gratitude gets frozen at the heart-springs because we feel our sincerity compromised by orthodox modes of expression. I hope the thought I have presented may clear a way to the freer and heartier expression of the impulse of thanksgiving which must be at our hearts, and which craves an outlet, by giving an acceptable humanized significance to the Thanksgiving idea.

If so, it remains for us to find the proper forms in which to give it utterance. We shall begin at home with

the family and work outward to all those, the living and the dead, who in their manifold ways have worked and striven to aid human growth and progress, until we reach the largest possible conception of a humanity which has been pathetically and tragically struggling through centuries toward a complete human life. We shall continually recall for gratitude and praise the great benefactors of men, their lofty deeds and works. We shall institute commemorative Sundays. And we shall have our All Souls' Day.

This is not to narrow or impoverish our spiritual life by precluding the outpouring of our sense of wonder and praise in the presence of the universe and that universal or cosmic power or energy or spiritual dynamic that works in it. As we look out over the illimitable universe, we shall continue to feel with Wordsworth the "presence that disturbs us with the joy of elevated thoughts," although it will not be a humanized presence.

We embrace a new form of human mysticism: that which comes of our imaginative, spiritual identification of ourselves with man, flesh of his flesh and soul of his soul, in all its heights and depths. That "enthusiasm of humanity" which has sometimes been expressed in words, and more rarely in personality, may perchance reach to such intensity that he who feels it may experience a mystical sense of union with his kind as deep as the ecstasy of the theological mystics, in which the self became merged in the sense of union with the Divine.

May we not then predict a new type of religion or

religious consciousness, growing as our sense of nearness to man deepens and widens? If I may put the premonition of such possibility into words, it will mean that to the God-consciousness of the mystics—whether it be a Christian Thomas à Kempis, a "God intoxicated" Spinoza, a Quaker mystic of the inner light, like George Fox, or an ethical mystic like Emerson—there will in time be added a man-consciousness bred of deep communion with the spirit of man. Out of such a consciousness, as it grows now and hereafter, will arise that sentiment of gratitude toward man, that sympathy with his struggles and outreachings, which will make of the Thanksgiving Festival above all else a great Festival of Humanity.

THE NEW SPIRIT

In this chapter we shall again be wandering further afield and using a wider background; and the reason is that the new spirit whereof we shall speak is not a thing of yesterday. It has had a slow and complicated gestation. The people of the frontier represent many phases of it. Any attempt to define it must be circumspect and long-ranged.

"The spirit": the first and last word for religion, its test word. "The spirit of the thing"—of the man—is always the final count. Yet what abuse it has suffered! To be "spiritual" has meant primarily to believe certain things; the *what* has been more important than the *how*. The sages knew otherwise; their battle was against literalism; and obviously so in the case of the Nazarene. His spirit was again and again lost in the letter. He was always being called upon to extricate it from the letter so that, seeing not, his literal-minded hearers might see. For religion, sight is insight. That strangely beautiful story, told only by the fourth evangelist, of his colloquy with the woman of Samaria accords not only with other sayings of his, but with his conduct, as in the deeply moving instance of the woman taken in adultery—one of the thrilling audacities of greatness. If only man had learned of him that "the

letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," how changed the chronicle of history would have been! How impossible the dogmatic literalism that perpetrated horrible cruelties against noble "unbelievers"; that brutal fanaticism of dogmatism by which the literal doctrines of the mind led men to violate the humanities of the heart! We may go further to ask what would have become of all the many-lettered creeds, all the wordy liturgies, the stereotyped prayers and praises lipped year in and year out from the lettered page?

Such a religion, ready-made, embalmed in the letter, book-bound is what most of us of riper years have known. With the best intentions, doubtless, it was foisted upon us in helpless childhood. The phrase is John Dewey's (in his *Character and Conduct*); and it provokes the observation that this is another of the revolts on the frontier, this revolt against the subjugation of the defenseless mind of the child by disputed stereotyped doctrines, and by methods damaging in their effects. It has even been boasted that seven years will suffice to turn this trick. Not stopping to argue the ethics of intellectual prescription and imposition, we make it the bridge to the consideration of the New Spirit that has broken with the religion of the letter, stiff with creed and dogma.

This new spirit, as we first made contact with it, was an awakening to the fact that these beliefs to which we had been subjected were none of ours. They were nothing possessed by our minds. We were catechized into them. Directly we left the parental shelter to con-

verse with the virile intelligences of our time, we thrust these inheritances at arm's length to examine them and test them by the realities of accredited knowledge and first-hand experience. We heard voices of doubt, and we embraced doubt as a piety of the intellect. And we found it commended by a Descartes and a Spinoza, standing at the portals of the modern age. And so we took our first steps toward the frontier for fresh air.

Out in the open, we became aware that vigorous minds were challenging all the customary acceptances. Memory recalls me to the fact that my title reproduces the title of the volume that was Havelock Ellis' first venture, published (as I find by turning to my gift copy) in 1890. That title might serve also for the subtitle of his latest work, *The Dance of Life;* for he is still an explorer and exponent of that new spirit. We all are. This new spirit is still in its awkward adolescence—at least as one who looks across those fifty years reads the story. When it comes of age, it will do so in the synthesis of religion. So my superscription remains the best title for any survey of that period of fecundity in which we are still living.

It may help my purpose to be waylaid for a moment by Havelock Ellis; for not only is he a typical figure because of his sensitiveness to a wide range of modern influences (with one or two striking omissions); but he is also a witness, especially in that first book, to the closeness of the Anglo-American alliance touched on in a previous chapter and returned to in our dealing with Emerson. In the first place it is significant that

Ellis should have found his largest constituency in this country, and his only biographers. In the second place he registers the conspicuous influence exerted in England by the trio of America's "new men," Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman. I must not overstate, even in a rapid sketch. That influence counted for little with some of the groups among which Ellis found himself, and have since come to power: it was not reflected in Morris, Shaw, Webb, Wallas, MacDonald. These and others were on the whole immune to this American contagion; as, in fact, they were cold to some other noteworthy influences—Arnold, Pater, Green, Caird, and the ethical invasion, which is a commentary on the varying eclecticism of the period. As for Shaw, and the streams that met in him, that unique figure needs a frame of its own. And so does the more faded figure of Morris, the man of incontestable genius, for Shaw and for everybody.

It was Edward Carpenter who, for a time at least, was the main link with this American trio; and the movement toward the simplification of life with which he was identified, and which they reinforced, was mostly vocal in him. Hobson, who wrote the best book on Ruskin, and has recently reminded us of the weighty influence of the Ruskin of *Unto This Last,* may be counted in. But we must not try to be exhaustive or too nicely discriminating. The point we make is that a birth into a New Spirit of interrogation and receptivity was in process, and still is in process; and that in its parturition the announcers of the New Life in a

new world played a significant part. That New Spirit could not continue to dwell in the old habitations. It was headed for the frontier. Not one of those men remained in the old fold.

But again we must discriminate, in a way that may help us toward our objective. In England that frontier spirit became politically complexioned. The Great War diverted it, and forced it into political channels. To-day it is embodied chiefly in the Labor group, which has developed the nascent Socialism of those early days. Several of the men of the Eighties have, in a quite accountable manner, arrived at that political frontier. Ellis has arrived in another sense, and in his individual fashion, as *The Dance of Life* intimates. But the English arrival is not religious in character. Religion plays a small part in it. Religion in England, in the more official sense, has been discussing the Prayer Book! and Transubstantiation and the parochial troubles of Anglicanism. The war is partly to blame, no doubt. Nevertheless, to find the really religious life of England one must not go to the churches. No New Spirit is there. The spiritual energies of England are desperately engaged in the political arena, coping with economic and industrial necessities, and in the endeavor to avert another war. This war against war is new. It is generating a new spirit of internationalism at odds with the stubborn spirit of nationalism and imperialism; and it finds Christendom meditating at last its disloyalty to the gospel of peace and love proclaimed nineteen hundred years ago by its Master. Of this new

spirit in Christianity, this belated rebaptism into the essential spirit of the prophet who gave a new commandment of love to the world, it is too early to speak at present. It is alive and similarly at strife with nationalism in this country also, and it may make a contribution to the New Spirit that cannot be slighted. With this diversion, to broaden our perspective, we take up the thread of our argument.

It avails little to deal vaguely with what we have in mind as the New Spirit, taken in the larger sense, and as dating back several decades before the Great War wrought its devastation. Can some broad definition of it be made? If so, it will be in terms of those real "needs" of the modern spirit which have been ignored by religion; and to which we alluded in our opening chapter. Is there some central outstanding need upon which the mind can center and upon which religion, as the focalizing force in men's lives, can center? We shall offer an interpretation in focus with the general outlook upon religion which we have tried to indicate, and it will be in that setting of a half-century of gestation.

The New Spirit we interpret as that which would rescue men from a prevailing feeling of helplessness in the tyrannous sweep of the forces that dominate life to-day. They are primarily economic and industrial forces, and give support to that Marxian economic interpretation of history which has been the right arm of the Socialist strength. This helplessness is world-wide, because the world is the economic unit of com-

merce. The interdependence of all nations is the truth which was written in large letters by the war and its aftermath. Hence the magnitude of the current. The helplessness expresses itself in international terms at Geneva. The League there, a new thing in world affairs, is striving against it. But it is now distressingly manifest in the most fortunate and resourceful and powerful of the great nations—here in America. And America stands helpless in the most paradoxical of situations, in a very excess of power and plenty. She has abundance, but she is helpless to profit by it. Millions of her citizens stand hungry in the market place begging for food and the chance to pay for it. The controls of power have failed. Vision fails; America gropes and flounders. And virtue fails her. Corruption gnaws at her. Crime cripples her; she is preëminent in crime. She cannot see that a break with her past is called for. She does not hear the call to a new orientation.

And America has supplied the descriptive word for this situation. What is happening to the world, say the analysts, is its "Americanization." Arnold used that word; and now, as John Dewey recently noted, it is the word used by Freienfels in his striking analysis of the world's predicament. The meaning of this predicament, we submit, is that America has fallen a prey to her own intensity of pursuit of the means of livelihood, enthralled by the romance of power; hypnotized by efficiency in supplying the material needs of men and in multiplying and magnifying these needs. Magnitude;

Big Business; big buildings; speed record-breaking; novelty; hectic salesmanship; breathless advertising. Buy, come buy! Consume! Spend! Ask not curiously why. We are committed to keeping things going! Going! But whither? We must speed up communication, wireless, aëroplane! But what have we to communicate? We must be labor-saving! But what are we doing with the savings?

"Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." We smile as we look back to the simple days when Emerson wrote that. We no longer ride on saddles. We speed fiercely in cars and planes. We are commandeered by them. Making time, we have no time for anything but stepping lively. We have produced the tired business man, the exhausted factory mechanic, and the uncultured specialist.

Whence cometh our help? Must it not come from some watchtower in the skies, whence man, looking out upon the widespreading scene, shall put again that old question, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? The gain that is preëminently America's has involved some perilous consequences, besides those already noted; in monstrous fortunes and a staggering inequality in the distribution of the gain; in an insatiable acquisitiveness and a superstitious reverence for property and private rights; in a speculative mania that gambles; in a fear of free speech and dangerous doctrines.

It is a call to regain his soul, his character; to find himself and the true end and dignity of his life in the

midst of this mass entanglement and boast of power that the New Spirit voices; too feebly as yet and confusedly, but indubitably. To be master instead of servant in the house of life which he has excitedly built; to assert and maintain his inner self and to live his inward life of personality against these tyrannous externalities, is its summons. The New Spirit is to help him to "keep to his native center fast" in this flood of "the world's flowing fates" (Emerson again); and to deliver him from spiritual starvation in the midst of an unprecedented material plenty and pomp.

To this call of the New Spirit religion must respond. We must begin there, at the center. Our need is a religion of fellowship in social purpose, animated by "the sentiment of the ideal life," setting up character in its totality, facing the totality of the human relationships to which men are committed.

But, it will be skeptically asked, what actual evidences does any New Spirit in our midst manifest of any concern for this recovery of soul, of any desire for simplification as a liberation from all this complexity? Do we not hear much of defeatism, disillusionism, and futilitarianism? Undoubtedly; but are not these invalidisms a sign of the craving for health? They are confessions of thwarted desires, and of that very spiritual insolvency which it is the task of religion to overcome.

There are other signs. One of them is the desire for a genuineness and reality and directness that would be rid of the pious make-believes and all the overdressing

and garniture that have sentimentally veiled reality. We have been seeking the "real," sometimes with a brusque and even brutal frankness: the real Washington, the real Lincoln, the real Beecher, the real Mark Twain. Are we not rewriting history in this spirit? Our psychology takes an almost savage delight in exposing the nudities of human nature. Art exhibits the bare ribs of design. Literature disdains ornament and fullness. Oratory is a despised art. Economy in power and device, sought by engineer and builder, is the watchword in all fields of artistry. There is indeed an idolatry of "technique" that drives headlong at simplification. We are tired of too much.

The war has been productive of a similar insistence upon a grim and curt truthfulness. But we did not wait for the war to evoke this temper; there it was in Tolstoy, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Shaw and others. It lived in the Socialists' war on poverty and slumdom. It asserts itself at this hour in the growing revolt against the humbug and venality of politics, its corrupt and hypocritical alliance with gangdom and with the plutocracy that finances its twin parties. We are sick of pious shams and shoddy.

But all these lack central motivation. They leave one in the vestibule. What they suggest is that the time invites a rally of forces in the name of a really operative religion. And the religion we propose aims at this very simplification and sincerity. It starts with an impulse of liberation which seeks to free us from complications of doctrine and ritual and a multitude of

irrelevancies; and it addresses itself to the urgent needs and interests of life as we know it; to conduct, to right living.

And this urgent need the New Spirit must meet with a recovered sense of spiritual reality as exigent as the material reality that grips us in an epoch of mechanistic conquest. It must, by its synoptical view of life, restore unity and integrity. And it must be really spiritual and inward—since life develops from within; intent on values, character values, personality values; not far-off things, celestial voyagings and postponed consequences in other worlds than this. It must be a study —a meditation, as Spinoza put it—of life, not death: nothing vicarious and posthumous; its saviors, those who saved by their lives; whose death sealed a last loyalty to life, and was for the sake of life in the world they left behind, life in the people they loved and ministered to in their strivings to meet the difficult demands of living. So simple a thing as that; a shared love of one's fellows; coöperation with them in the common human task, giving and asking the best in ourselves and in them, and making that possible by the practical reordering of social life.

The New Spirit is an old spirit disengaged from accretions and repeated reinvasions of distractions and irrelevances. It is, as we have deciphered it, the spirit of fellowship in pursuit of the Highest Good, which is the Good Life, a collective Good. "Good"; the word has savors that are not palatable; but it was Plato's and Aristotle's word, and it was Jesus' word. "Be not

merely good; be good for something," says our Walden sage. Be a good citizen, said the Greeks; a good neighbor, said the Galilean. It is a choral word, chanting the Common Good, the Commonwealth of Man. And the fellowship that unites man in the chanting of it will aid in all appropriate ways in maintaining the mood that fosters the sentiment of the ideal life and the passion for perfection in that finest of the fine arts, the art of living. It is to evoke responsiveness to all the influences that will release in us the forces by which alone man can live deeply, harmoniously and progressively with his fellows. It is to see these forces whole, and to deal with them in the spirit of the Whole. Its purpose will be the evocation of the excellent at the call of excellence, and its orchestrated expression in the symphony of life as it may be rendered by all the choirs and voices, each contributing its unique qualities and values to the ensemble.

ACCEPTANCE

HERE I had planned to close; but upon second thought I decide to add a last word upon that last thing, faith. We all end with a faith of some sort—faith in life and our reasons for living. There is no escape from a faith in our own rationality. Even if we doubt, we trust the validity of our doubting; we constitute reason a tribunal competent even to doubt. In my reading of the new religious attitude here presented, faith takes on a new aspect; but I recognize that this reading involves the personal equation more conspicuously than it has been involved heretofore. And this raises the prior question, as to how far I may seem to my readers to have colored—or discolored—my presentation by having drawn too heavily upon peculiarly personal experiences and views. Upon this point also I should like to say a closing word: so that I will preface what I have to say about faith by a paragraph or two on this allied topic.

II

Let me suppose, then, that the verdict of the reader on surveying the case I have presented should be that my interpretation of the religious frontier has been too personal and not sufficiently disinterested. He might say: "There is no such border land as that: it is

a mirage of your own mind; a No-man's Land of the wishful imagination." My reply to that would have to be a heavily documented story, running into a multitude of details. I have stated that my sources are largely autobiographical; and I might perhaps have safeguarded myself and the cause I have had at heart by using the first person more freely. But I must leave the matter to the fair judgment of the reader. I have drawn upon a half-century of experience in the conviction I entertain that the frontier of to-day is explicable only by the complex gestation that has been in process on the frontier during this period. Not that what is called the modern spirit does not admittedly run back further than that. No moment of birth can be assigned to it. I have referred to Descartes and Spinoza as standing at its portals; but the scrupulous historian may contend that they had their forerunners, and hark back to the New Learning and the Renaissance. I have also referred to Goethe as the recognized exemplar of modernism; but I may be reminded of Lessing and others. I have cited the doctrine of evolution and other contributory factors, all of which are to be taken into account as parts of a composite. I must leave my case in this haze—if so it be thought—of generalities; and the deductions I have drawn must commend themselves on their merits without specific verifications.

That the religious frontier to-day and here in America exists much as I have described it is, I think, attested by a large variety of evidence. There is the endless debate on the platform, in the pulpit, and in cur-

rent literature and journalism. Skepticism is obviously a popular and remunerative theme. A dozen well-known names might be cited in proof. Atheism boldly raises its propagandist flag. Humanism is a battle-ground. Fundamentalism and modernism are contenders in the public arena. And amid the strife rises the plaint of Church and Synagogue that the young generation is so wicked because it rejects the Bible. A Seminar of Catholics, Protestants and Jews actually proposed to arrest the corruption by teaching the Ten Commandments! Rose-water for the plague! The sooner we look for the deeper causes of our ailments—including the waywardness of youth—in the deeper currents of tendency, the sooner will the really serious drift toward indifference and levity, and the grave corruption of allied business, politics and crime, be comprehended.

My plea has been for a religion that has already found a foothold on the frontier and that directly addresses itself to meeting this contemporary situation by making right conduct the master concern of religion; right conduct seen as rooted in character, a real inwardness of life; and, objectively, as seeking a synoptical view of life expressed through a fellowship inspired by a social vision and the ideal of a Common Good and a coming Commonwealth.

III

But this matter of allowing for the personal equation assumes another aspect in relation to that issue of

faith about which I would say a final word. My reading of what faith means for the new religion of the frontier is more than a personal reading, I believe; but to substantiate that I should have to attempt a documentation for which I cannot find space.

What I would do is to testify to the gain in tranquillity of mind that comes of making the old primary concern about beliefs concerning the universe a secondary and subordinate concern. "I believe"; so begin the creeds. That believing is the first solicitude; and it is the first step toward the tragedy of religious history, the *demand* for belief; as if belief could be demanded! And after all it is not belief that is secured, but only outward assent. That is what the helpless and unbelieving child is made to parrot, "I believe!" The child is incapable of belief. And then as soon as the growing mind raises any questions, it sins, and it fears. Such is the consequence of making so-called belief the first solicitude of religion. It begets an inquietude that is touched with fear.

A religion that assigns to belief, to creed, a secondary place, in order to give first place to the controllable and supreme factor of right conduct, performs the invaluable service of releasing the mind from this incubus, this anxious sense of culpability attaching to belief, this falsified responsibility.

"I believe!" Stay! What you really believe is evidenced not by what you say, but by what you do; or at least it should be. That is the only test. "A life is a confession of faith." Look to your life, your con-

duct. There you reveal what you believe about your fellow man and how much of the spirit of truth and justice and neighborliness you have in you. Belief, then, involves verification in conduct. Detach it from conduct and it loses reality. It is for the sake of conduct. Man's first responsibility is for conduct, and for the beliefs required for right conduct.

IV

If we now try to run down this issue of the place of belief in the economy of the spiritual life, we may state it in most general terms as turning upon the assumption of man's intellectual responsibility for solving the problem of the universe. It is as if we conceived of the universe as serving notice on man that he is expected to find out its meaning, that there is only one meaning, and that he is in peril if he does not find it. He must justify his presence in the universe by solving the riddle it propounds.

May not man reasonably protest that this is not his affair? May he not object, as Goethe does, that "man is not born to solve the problem of the world"? but rather to understand the limits within which his intelligence may properly exercise itself? The universe is not his affair. He has been mysteriously born into it. He doesn't know why. It was not with his consent. He was not consulted. May he not reasonably expect the universe that has thrust him into life to show some rational consideration toward him, not to expect too

much of him? He has a right to expect reasonableness from it. It has endowed him with reason: can it be to push him to the breaking-point? To plague him with questions beyond the reaches of his soul? That same reason in him says, No!

Here swims into view the appalling supposition, in the doctrine of Redemption, that the universe has penalized man by bearing him under the ban, the curse of original sin. If the universe did that, it committed a great wrong against him. He refuses to charge that wrong to the Universe that has come to consciousness and reason in him. But we have here a root of the fear that infects the mind with the fretting responsibility of professing certain correct and official views about the universe, as if to justify its very existence and his presence in it; as if it declared to him, "Unless you believe this or that about me, you are in danger of the judgment."

It is, I say, with a blessed sense of relief from this anxiety as to belief that the mind is freed when the axis of the mind is changed from belief to conduct. The challenge is now thought of as the challenge of life to meet its problem, How to live? And man, if he accepts life, does so with the faith that it will justify itself by virtue of the values it enfolds and reveals, and the satisfactions it will bring in the endeavor to meet its practical problems. To ask why life is, why anything is, is vain. Why am I here? Why am I at all? are equally futile questions. Faith is the acceptance of life as carrying its own justifications, or as promising to do so.

Man's dealing shall be with life as adequate to its own meanings. Life is a sufficiently impressive fact, and needs no authentication by any extraneous scriptural and pontifical authority. He will deal with it at first hand; and will refuse to believe that it is there only to puzzle him and to force him to recognize the ascendency of an authoritarianism or a priestism into whose only keeping the solution, the carefully guarded and otherwise unsolvable secret, is given. That strikes him as absurd; a universe that withholds its meaning just in order that a particular race or church into whose sole keeping the mysterious secret has been entrusted, may exercise its power!

Instead, then, of feeling that it is an unfortunate necessity that leads us to espouse a religion that announces neutrality as to beliefs, creeds, dogmas which embody verdicts upon the universe, we feel a great liberation. Let the deep mystery of life unfold what meanings it may in the school of living. "Try me," it seems to say, "I am self-justifying and self-explanatory. My values are inherent in me, and you will find them self-commending. My way is not easy: but follow my best clues and you will find that I am worth while. And among those clues you will early discover that to get along with the children of men you must be truthful and just and kind. That is the A B C of the matter and quite simple. But the discovery of what is true and just and kind is a slow and laborious business; and that is your business. Embrace the task, and you shall find a deep satisfaction in it. It will keep you alive; it will

educate and develop your powers. It will call on your creative energy; and you will find your happiness in this creative activity, your own and other people's."

This view raises a host of questions, of course. Any view does. It indicates, as we see it, the attitude that is being born on the frontier. Those who have adopted it report various outcomes. Whether it result in a mysticism like that of Whitman and Carpenter and Tagore, who testify to the inflow that follows upon unperturbed acceptance and receptivity, is not the issue. When a distinguished visitor to Carpenter was asked for his impression of the man, he said that Carpenter struck him as one "who had squared his accounts with the universe." He carried a calm and confident air of acceptance. That we surmise to be the conquering mood to be desired. A life of activity, bent on the right conduct of daily affairs, should grow into this mood of wondering yet quiet acceptance almost as a by-product of its right-mindedness. The three men I have mentioned are accounted mystics. Very well. In last analysis faith of any sort is a kind of mysticism. It pushes out from the shore of ascertainable and verifiable fact upon a sea of imaginative hope.

V

A man should know that his responsibility for his beliefs hinges upon his responsibility for the conduct of his life. He cannot put beliefs off and on as he does his clothes. His beliefs have him at their mercy. What he thinks depends upon what he is. If he would change

his thinking, he must change himself. What is true of our feelings and emotions, our tastes and admirations, namely, that we cannot change them at will, is true also of our beliefs. Our beliefs, for the time being, cannot be changed at once by a fiat. They are a product of our living, and we must live our way into new ones. That is why required or compulsory belief is, as we have already said, an absurdity. Acts may be forbidden; convictions cannot be. False thinking is checked by its evil consequences in action. We learn by doing, or vicariously by studying other people. Man's intellectual responsibility is the responsibility for being thoughtful; to that end he may discipline himself. He can acquire, if he tries, the habit of thoughtfulness, of considerateness. He can strive for consistency. But William James's phrase, "the will to believe," is self-contradictory. To try to believe, even, involves an absurdity.

Let religion cast away this vestige of its ancient fear and fret lest one should miss some preordained way of thinking about the universe, life, God; and a burden is lifted from the mind. It is free. It accepts. It does its best. It does not cling fearfully to suspected beliefs as if suspended over a precipice of destruction.

This, then, is the emancipation that comes with the removal of belief, creed, from the first plan in one's religion to the second. Living comes first; and we cannot postpone living. Moreover, living supplies the chief data upon which our belief must be based. And living is a progressive undertaking. We grow; we must not cease to grow, because growth is the sign of life. So

our beliefs will grow and change. There can be no finality, no fixation.

With action it is different. Here we are convicted of insufficiency. We fall short. We are teased by our imperfection. Our work, our performance, our conduct is not good enough. We cannot rest in our attainments, because we harbor ideals and the love of perfection. But sometimes we succeed, at least for the time being. We know the joy of a good hit, a lucky performance. We have "excelled ourselves." We did not know we could do so well. . . . But we dare not rest in this attainment. We are lost if we do. This is the difference between belief and conduct. We can *try to do* something, but we cannot *try to believe* some particular doctrine. Set up a belief as a goal, and we are self-stultifying. Set up a possible deed or achievement, and we can gather all our energies for the attempt to put it through.

Here I recall an experience which I will venture to report. In my early days of contact with him, Felix Adler—to whom I gratefully acknowledge a deep indebtedness—uttered a phrase that has stood by me. He was speaking of the trying occasions when, after careful preparation, he found a small handful of people to hear him; "but," he said, "I have always acted on the principle that there are no minor occasions." There spoke the passion for perfection. One is pledged to the best, no matter how humble the task or the occasion. And always one's thinking is to be one's best.

And there the responsibility for thought and belief

ends. One's thinking becomes a form of conduct. It sheds anxiety. The tranquil mood of acceptance possesses us. We are in the hands of our character. We attend to that, as that attends with singleness of purpose to its worthy, its best, expression in conduct, under the challenge of circumstance.

Hence the objection urged by critics of a "mere" religion of ethics, that it doesn't believe anything about the universe, or its Maker, or its guarantee of immortality, becomes a leading recommendation. It has dismissed the fear of misbelief. Its spirit of tranquil acceptance is combined with a supreme faith in the value of the effort to live aright. The gate to belief is active loyalty to the human task. Acceptance is not resignation: it is an acceptance of the invigorating call to life and the challenging demands of living.

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